THE

THEATRICAL RECORDER:

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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THE DISCONTENTED MAN:

A COMEDY,

IN ONE ACT,

TRANSLATED FROM

THE FRENCH OF M. LE BRUN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUPRÉ, the Discontented Man.

VALCOURT, the Lover of AMELIA.

DU PONT, House Steward to M. DUPRE.

A FARMER.

AMELIA, the Ward of M. DUPRE.

MAD. DU PONT.

THE DISCONTENTED MAN:

A COMEDY, IN ONE ACT.

SCENE I.

VALCOURT *and* AMELIA.

Amelia.

STILL and for ever undecided?

Val. What can I do?

Am. Speak to my guardian.

Val. I speak in vain. No words can convince him. My fears——

Am. Are out of season. My guardian is cross, but his heart is excellent.

Val. The least trifle makes him angry. The opinions of others are always wrong: nothing is right but what he says and does.

Am. He must lead me to you by the hand, and very civilly say—"Condescend, my dear Sir, to marry my ward. She is young and rich; and as for love, it will come in time."

Val. You are unjust! He knows my love, and calls it folly or weakness. To contradict him would be dangerous.

Am. (*going*) If so, you may wait long enough.

Val. Nay, hear me! What would I not attempt for your sake? But——

Am. Oh, very true! Say nothing to him! It would be wrong in me to make you run the least risk! The sacrifice would be too great! Whether we part or not, what is it to me?

Val. Part!

Am. Marriage might be a dangerous experiment for me!

Val. What pleasure can you take in tormenting me? Your beauty, your virtue, and your wit, are irresistible, and the guarantees of happiness. Do not effect to be coy and capricious.

Am. (*smiling*) I have no such intention. I am willing enough to think you love me, and to make you happy is the height of my ambition. I abjure and despise artifice; but would you have me publish the feelings of my heart to every

one I meet? Declare that my happiness is centered in you? or, be guilty of something equally foolish and ridiculous? The task of conquering my guardian's scruples ought to be yours.

Val. You are right! I will speak! Your goodness gives me courage. Shielded by love, I will encounter, and I hope conquer, his prejudices. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—AMELIA *alone.*

Am. Yes, dear Valcourt, with you the marriage state may be supportable. Gentle as you are, and desirous to please, especially me, my future happiness will justify my choice.

SCENE III.—*Enter* DU PONT.

Am. Well Du Pont! what is the matter with you? You seem afflicted?

Du P. I am indeed! I come to implore your pity.

Am. You frighten me, Du Pont! Let me hear.

Du P. Soon or late, Madam, love will be obeyed.

Am. (*aside*) As I can witness.

Du P. Wishing to be happy, and asking nobody's advice, I contracted an engagement.

Am. Are you married?

Du P. And have been these seven years, Madam.

Am. Unknown to us all!

Du P. Though I have served him above twenty years, I was fearful of opening my heart to my master. He would but have refused me, and would have condemned that love to which, alas, I had the weakness to yield.

Am. Do you then repent?

Du P. Oh, no! Never were two hearts more happy. Never have we had the least disagreement: our affection was silent though private: our happy days have all had wings, the succeeding more pleasant than the past.

Am. Then what is the cause of your grief?

Du P. Poverty. I have fought long, hoping at length to conquer. You alone, Madam, can rescue me: now, while I am speaking, a cruel creditor—— I cannot conquer my feelings! Pray forgive me! Perhaps, at this moment, my goods are seized. My only hope is that you will speak for me.

Am. Poor man! I will.

Du P. I knew the goodness of your heart!

Am. But your wages?

Du P. Were not enough for our wants, and I have been obliged to borrow.

Am. Have you any children?

Du P. Yes, two: there lies my misery. My wife and

children are without bread, and I, an unfortunate father, have nothing but my tears to give them.

Am. Be comforted! All may change, and soon perhaps. What money do you want?

Du P. The sum is so large, that I fear my master——

Am. Fear nothing, only speak.

Du P. Above thirty pounds.

Am. (*aside*) That is beyond my power. (*giving her purse*) Take this; my guardian will make up the sum: he is choleric, but does not want feeling. From a heart like his, every thing may be hoped. Tell me when he comes home. If he should refuse my request, I shall find a friend. [*Exit* Du Pont.

SCENE IV.

Am. It's vexatious that I cannot give him the money! This teaches me the value of riches. I wish I could have relieved him myself.

SCENE V.—*Enter* VALCOURT *and* DUPRE.

Dup. (*without*) I'll hear no more! It is absurd!

Am. Here comes my guardian.

Dup. (*entering*) Are you mad?

Am. Good morning, Sir!

Dup. Good morrow! Good morrow!

Am. (*going off, to* Valcourt) This is not the time. [*Exit.*

Dup. It is all in vain.

Val. But, Sir——

Dup. Do you hear him! I have nothing more to say.

Val. For ever dissatisfied with men and things?

Dup. Yes, for ever! How can it be otherwise? Town or country, every object I meet raises my bile.

Val. Listen only while I prove——

Dup. The existence of good! Pshaw, your system is absurd! My heart is and shall be my judge, and not cold and common-place argument. I decide from facts. Go where I will, I meet mistake, extravagance, malignity, and the vile passions. This poor world is possessed by physical and moral evil. Yes, all is evil.

Val. I do not understand the blind mania by which you have so long been tormented. With every means of happiness, you eternally complain!

Dup. Happiness! I am not master of my feelings. I cannot with an indifferent eye view the sufferings of men, or second their persecutors. I cannot calmly behold upstarts, with hearts of iron, oppress the indigent, and, while they proceed from vice to vice, neither feel remorse nor meet chastizement! Whoever can see this, patiently, is unworthy the name of man. What-

ever I may suffer for my folly, I shall for ever brave the vicious and love the good.

Val. Then you allow the existence of goodness?

Dup. Yes, in holes and corners it exists! it's face disfigured, it's language not understood; while triumphant vice, with all its hideous features, is become the idol of men.

Val. Why so angry, at present? This morning, you were calm and good-humored.

Dup. I have reason sufficient: never again shall I be reconciled to human nature. Taking a walk to soothe my cares, sauntering along and ruminating, I suddenly heard cries, followed the sound, saw two children, almost naked, but with angel looks, and their mother, in tears, under the gripe of a cruel creditor! Appearances showed him to be opulent, yet he beheld their misery with indifference: nay, it excited his contempt! I could not rstrain my tears, and looked first at the mother, then at the children. "Yes," said I, "it will be my happiness to protect one of those wretched families that are the daily victims of misery; or at least to give a partial relief." The mother saw my emotion, flew to implore my pity, pointed to her children, kneeled and entreated I would think of their afflicted father, and appealed to me as to a tutelar deity. "Your misery," said I, "shall end: you shall not pray in vain." Hearing this, the cruel creditor stretched forth his avaricious hand, and did not once shudder while he received the accursed metal that causes so much misery! When paid, "You are the dupe of art," said he: "it is thus that beggars find protectors." My blood boiled to hear him. "You have your money, be gone!" cried I, "and let your victim breathe!" He left us with a furious look, while I saw the mother at my feet, her tongue silent, but her eye how expressive! She pressed my hands, kissed them, laid them on her heart, endeavoured to speak, but a shocking paleness came over her, and, as I went to raise her, she fell, to appearance dead! I ran, I called; no succour came, and I only saw the poor orphans about to lose their mother, fate having finished its work. My cries at length brought aid, her senses began to return, I hoped to save her life, and for that purpose avoided her returning gratitude, and returned home, here to indulge in the recollection of human wretchedness!

Val. Rather in the delight of the benevolence of your heart! Men are doomed to suffer; but it is no little consolation that their sufferings may be alleviated.

Dup. Happiness is an ideal being, or it should be my resource to ward off the dark chagrin that devours my heart. Yes, I would be the benefactor of the human race, and would aid to guard them against the raging passions, or to render them impotent; but happiness is not the lot of men. No sooner are they virtuous than they are oppressed. Vice is the great corrupter! Proud opulence treads honorable indigence in the

dust! The man of reason acts in vain, and the unfortunate end by being vile. I except those I have just relieved; they are beloved; their neighbours speak well of them. The wife is mild and lovely, and her husband they say is worthy of her. I am told he is in the service of some strange fellow, who gives him little, treats him ill, and is in fact the cause of his misfortunes. I have no patience with such a master! But he shall know what he has done, and shall blush.

Val. Would you but overcome this humor, you would soon be sensible of your own worth. Every heart around you would be satisfied, and you would enjoy and bless the happiness you create.

Dup. I might be foolishly deceived! Can I be ignorant of man's ingratitude?

Val. No; but you might meet it with a smile. Nor would you find those ungrateful by whom you are beloved: not your gentle ward, for instance, who was committed to your care by her dying father, and whose increasing virtues you daily witness.

Dup. If I have aided to give them birth, I have but done my duty. Her father was my friend.

Val. Then crown your work! You know my meaning.

Dup. Heaven forbid! She is too young for wedlock; perhaps she may never marry. I speak plainly. To a thinking being, marriage is but slavery. Do not hope for my consent. Who can say how long your love would last? Born with a breath, with a breath it dies.

Val. Never! You ought better to know the person whom I love.

Dup. Such is youth! it doubts of nothing! All is for the best! Did I not interfere, you soon would feel your whole imprudence. What would be the fruits of your love? Children, who would curse their existence! You would behold their misery, you and their mother, unable to remove it! Men are their own tormentors: they daily dig the pits into which they fall: women, wine, feasting, gaming, the vices of men, abridge their lives; virtue appeals to them in vain. All my life I have lived by rule, yet, at fifty, find my strength decline. Grief brings man to the grave, and the happiest day of his life is that of his death.

Val. What if your father, Sir, had followed this system?

Dup. He would have done well; but he wanted prudence. Life was given to man not as a blessing, but as a burden: the birth of affliction is its daily offspring. In the pursuit of happiness from his cradle, he drops in the grave before it is overtaken. Be just, and you cannot but allow, happiness is a chimera.

Val. Mine were certain, would you but consent. Surely you

would suffer love at least to strew the thorny path with a few flowers?

Dup. They are poisonous! Blind as men are, they raise altars to the deity that mocks them, deprives them of reason, makes them his sport, and leads them to sure repentance! nay, to crown his work, he does but insult the misery he has made.

Val. Must we then renounce the best affections of the heart?

Dup. We——we ought not to be their dupes.

Val. Did you never love?

Dup. Yes, and am mad to remember it! I have paid the tribute of folly! My tender love was deceived! I was soon blind, but soon cured. Conquer your love, as I have done, and avoid its extreme danger and disorder. When I loved, I gave not my heart by halves. I am too much your friend to have you married.

Val. But do you not esteem your lovely ward.

Dup. I esteem nobody.

Val. Her virtues are worthy of love, and mine will be eternal.

Dup. Virtues! Pshaw! We are none of us virtuous.

Val. What, not yourself?

Dup. Me! I despise myself! I have a hundred opposite defects! I feel them, see them, yet cannot conquer them. My own heart, while I rail at the wicked, bids me rank myself of the number.

Val. You say you have loved, and the gentle Amelia——

Dup. I love you both, for I am foolish—I know I shall repent, and some day or other I shall hate you, as you will me.

Val. How can you so mistake?

Dup. Once more, have done! or I shall quit the place.

Val. That rather becomes *me.*

Dup. If you please. Good day.

Val. Can I not move you?

Dup. No.

Val. 'Tis strange!

Dup. Good day.

Val. This obstinacy rends my heart. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

Dup. There! Nothing but complaints! Blockhead! He has no cares on his mind, yet wants to marry.

SCENE VII.—*Enter a* Farmer.

Dup. So! What have you to say?

Far. I am your tenant.

Dup. I know that! What then?

Far. My quarter is up.

Dup. Pay Du Pont.

Far. He is gone out, Sir.

Dup. That fellow is never at home. Come to-morrow.

Far. If you would but hear me!——I—I have had a misfortune.

Dup. I am to be pestered again! You are always complaining.

Far. When you know, Sir——

Dup. Speak at once! What have you to say?

Far. Your anger, Sir——

Dup. Is in my words, not in my heart. Let me hear.

Far. It will make you sorry.

Dup. You will make me mad! Will you speak, or will you not?

Far. My barn was rebuilding, my corn was stacked, and it has been all burned; set on fire by lightning.

Dup. When?

Far. Last night.

Dup. And do you want to pay me *now*? Do you doubt whether I have a human heart? Strange impudence! If the lightning had burned my corn, I could have borne the loss. My riches are not the fruits of *my* labor, but that of my ancestors: I owe them to chance. A few pounds more or less matter little to me: but you, in one night, have lost the labor of a year! Take back your money: two days will not pass over your head before fresh misfortunes will make it necessary.

Far. But, Sir, I owe you——

Dup. Good manners. Do as I bid you. When you are able to pay, I will take your money.

Far. Be sure, Sir, that——

Dup. Ay, ay! very well.

Far. My gratitude——

Dup. Good, good!

Far. Can never end.

Dup. Will you be gone? I want no gratitude.

[*Exit* Farmer.

SCENE VIII.

Dup. I find vexations but increase upon me! Affliction is every where, yet men preach of happiness.

SCENE IX.—*Enter* AMELIA.

Dup. Why should Heaven deprive this poor wretch of his harvest? and why am I more fortunate than he?

Am. That you may give him relief.

Dup. Who asked for *you*, young lady? Your presence is not necessary. I hope I can act without your advice.

Am. Your angry words, Sir——

Dup. I pretend to no politeness.

Am. So much the worse.

Dup. As you think! A pretty lesson! At my age, must I serve an apprenticeship to the modes of the time? Stretch out my hand to the man I hate, embrace while I stab him, hide with honied words my deceit, and become worthless, that I may please fools and be ranked among them? Knavery is polite; the lips of honesty are frank.

Am. (*smiling*) Then you think there is such a thing as honesty?

Dup. I hope I have the right so to think.

Am. (*smiling*) And as for good breeding to me, that may easily be dispensed with! just as the humor may suit!

Dup. I am not fond of being teased. My present humor does not suit your pleasantry.

Am. Dear Sir, I will take care not to be too pleasant; especially when I want to talk with you; and I am now going to begin. (*she sits down*) Come!

Dup. Really, Miss——

Am. Oh, you must hear me.

Dup. Madcap!

Am. I know it: I wish to be so sometimes. Serious thoughts do but bring sorrow: the dose of life should be mixed with a grain of folly.

Dup. Ah! Prettily said!

Am. Is it to your taste?

Dup. One may excuse any thing in a girl.

Am. Nay, nay, pray be ill-humored, if that amuse you! I shall not smile the less. I like the mistake of being pleased better, I own, than the moroseness of a man who takes every thing in disgust, sees nothing but ill, and has the mania to calumniate, proscribe, and hate the human race. It may be that all men are mad, in one way or other; and, since I must choose, I would rather laugh than cry. Innocent follies seem to me preferable to sour chagrin.

Dup. Upon my word! Well, my pretty preceptor, what have you more to say?

Am. You shall hear, my dear guardian. Did I but think that your severe principles would produce any good, I would never disturb your dreams, but leave you full leisure to confront and bring the wicked to shame, by your eloquence; but, since the conversion is very uncertain, leave them to their fate, and live for and smile on your friends. Learn to laugh, and sing, like me; and, for once, own yourself to be the subject of the queen of pleasures.

Dup. That would be charming!

Am. To be sure it would. Be cheerful and gay, forsake your sorrows, fight under my banners, and I promise you victory. Come,-do not blush to sacrifice the pitiful pride of being singular.

Dup. Have you done?

Am. Yes, Sir.

Dup. I am glad of it. But how satirical you are! You do not blush to take advantage of forbearance.

Am. Ha, ha, ha!

Dup. And speak with such a tone of authority!

Am. You see how charmingly it becomes me.

Dup. Indeed! How happens that?

Am. Because I am young and handsome.

Dup. So much the worse for you! What is beauty? the bloom of a moment! It may flatter the eye, may for a day seduce, but it is only skin-deep. He that——

Am. Have mercy, Sir, have mercy. Weak as our charms are, on them we have founded the most delightful empire! which I am sure you are too gallant to destroy. You have more prudence. If you have any regard for Valcourt, you still will suffer love to be blind.

Dup. So! marriage is now to be the subject!

Am. By no means. I have the honor to converse with a philosopher, whose opinions I ought to respect, and abide by their decision. I come to deliver another petition, which I know you will grant, were it only to give me pleasure.

Dup. Petition! Oh! Some toys, I suppose. I don't understand such things.

Am. Ah, you think the brain of woman is always busied about toys. That is the opinion of all you philosophers. We have our defects, and yet we sometimes are as fortunate in bestowing happiness as the men themselves.

Dup. Enough of this prattle; my patience is worn out.

Am. Only a few words more. Bad as man is, you must allow it is a pleasure to do him service.

Dup. To the point.

Am. To console him, give him aid——

Dup. To the point!

Am. And render life supportable.

Dup. Once more to the point!

Am. Without leaving your own house, you, Sir, may enjoy this pleasure, which gives such delight to a sensitive being.

Dup. Poverty in my house! That I deny. I take care that every body shall be at their ease. However ill I may be served, I watch over their wants; and, if they have any unknown to me, they must be attributed to their own ill conduct.

Am. You go too fast, guardian. He, of whom I speak, has not wages sufficient to maintain him and his wife.

Dup. His wife! What fool is he, who, not contented with having enough, and living at his ease, has exposed himself to the pains, penalties, and wretchedness of marriage? But it is his own fault! so let him suffer.

Am. Will you do nothing for him, Sir?

Dup. Nothing! Marry without consulting any one! without my consent! And does he think, after that, to have claims on my benevolence? No, no; never.

Am. I own he was to blame; but his wife, Sir——

Dup. Is like himself: she should have foreseen the consequences of such mischief.

Am. Ah, Sir, you could not have resisted her tears, and her despair.

Dup. I know my weakness, and 'tis played upon.

Am. Only let——

Dup. You plead in vain: I'll see him no more.

Am. And will take from him the little that he earns.

Dup. Yes.

Am. Turn him away?

Dup. Yes.

Am. What will become of him? Thrown in prison, perhaps! Nay his goods may at this moment be seized.

Dup. So much the worse.

Am. You have too much feeling not to pardon him.

Dup. I tell you again, I will not.

Am. He will then have no resource! How is he to live? I can do little! You know the depth of my purse; I can but sell the trinkets I have.

Dup. That I forbid.

Am. Could I see his children starve?

Dup. Children! Has he children?

Am. Children, born to suffer for the fault of their father.

Dup. Bring them here! Put them under my care! I know I am providing a source of ingratitude to myself; but, so be it!

Am. Ah, Sir, turn away the worthy Du Pont, who has served you so long, has been so devoted to you, and would you have him leave your house for a prison?

Dup. Du Pont?

Am. Alas, 'tis he!

Dup. This is too much! I could not have believed he would have used me so! I could never have thought he could have been guilty of such a fault.

Am. Alas, who is never guilty? He pays for it dearly! Torn from the wife whom he loves, oppressed by your anger and his own shame, what must become of him? What, but starve and die; his wife partaking the same fate.

Dup. Let him stay.

Am. And will you pay his debts?

Dup. Those that are already incurred I will; and tell him that, from this day, his wages are doubled.

Am. Ah, my excellent guardian! What a noble heart you have!

Dup. Enough, enough!

Am. Though you do complain a little too loudly against our present follies, who can blame you? Or who forbear to love you! You are a dear guardian!

Dup. Enough, I tell you.

Am. Let me kiss you—What, you won't! Well, well, you cannot refuse the tribute of a grateful heart. I must run and tell Du Pont how happy you have made him. [*Exit.*

SCENE X.

Dup. One must forgive inconsistency in man. The fellow has in him the simplicity and goodness of childhood! But the world! Yes, men seduce and pervert each other. I am sorry he has found a source of misery for himself.

SCENE XI.—*Enter* MADAME DU PONT.

Dup. Who is there?

M. Du P. I come to kneel and thank you for your benefactions.

Dup. (*Helps her to rise, and gives her a chair*) Well, how do you find yourself?

M. Du P. Much better, Sir.

Dup. Have you recovered strength and courage?

M. Du P. To you I owe them and all.

Dup. You shall not want. I am indignant, when I recollect the scene of this morning.

M. Du P. How much are we indebted to you!

Dup. Not yet enough. You stand in need of further aid, and shall have it. How are your children?

M. Du P. Both well, Sir.

Dup. I will protect their infancy. Tell your husband to come to me; I wish to consult with him, that I may find how I can best aid him to serve himself.

M. Du P. Too late we have known your benevolent heart.

Dup. Benevolent? Not too much of that.

M. Du P. Remorse torments me! I do not merit what you have done. When you shall know who I am, you will hate and punish me.

Dup. Pshaw! I do not expect to find you perfect. You have your faults; of that I am as certain as you can be; 'tis the rule. Why should I expect you to be an exception? I am sorry both for them and your misfortunes. We all bear the plague about us, and smell of contagion. I, like you, stand in

need of indulgence. I have shocking defects, as every hour and every place have proved. The most virtuous of men is only he who has the least vice. Bring your husband.

M. Du P. How shall he dare appear before you?

Dup. Can the person who relieves intimidate?

M. Du P. Alas, he has long loved and feared you.

Dup. Let him but remember his wife and children, and he will no longer fear that gloomy character, which often leads me into error and makes me unhappy. His condition resembles that of poor Du Pont, a servant of mine, who has done very wrong: but I forgive him! I can be severe, but I cannot hate.

M. Du P. (*with ecstasy*) Do you forgive him?

Dup. Why are you thus transported?

M. Du P. It is he; Du Pont is my husband!

SCENE *The Last.*

Enter AMELIA *and* VALCOURT, *bringing in* DU PONT.

Dup. Is it so! Come hither, Du Pont.

Du P. Here, at your feet——

Dup. Rise, man, rise. (*giving his hand*) It was not right, Du Pont——

Du P. You see my confusion!

Dup. Well, well! all is passed; all is forgotten. Only tell me, my good friend, what could inspire this diffidence? Why have you so long been silent? Could you not support a few moments of ill humor? I am choleric, I grant; but you know my heart. Should I have suffered you to live in such wretchedness?

Du P. I feel my fault: what can be a greater than to have once doubted of your goodness? The action was brought against me when you were in the country, and you only returned yesterday.

Dup. But you had money of mine in your hands: the distress was so great, and the creditor so barbarous, that——

Du P. Touch money of yours, Sir? I would rather die!

Dup. Right! Right! I know you are an honest fellow. I am ashamed to have remembered your defects, and have forgotten your virtues.

Val. You see, Sir, there is such a thing as virtue. An honest servant, a faithful husband, and a kind father, I shall not blush to follow the example of Du Pont.

Dup. So, so! I am again to be teased. I pardon Du Pont, because he is already married: the evil is done; 'tis past remedy.

Am. Valcourt would never repent.

Dup. How do you know?

Am. Lord, he just now swore it!

Dup. You are much too forward, young lady. Women

formerly confined such thoughts to their own bosoms: now they more than meet the men half way.

Am. My heart tells me, Sir, I do not merit the reproof. Du Pont proves that marriage is not so fearful a thing: but I ask no consent to an action which you disapprove. Order what you please, Sir, and I will obey; will sacrifice youth, and love, to the care, tenderness, and affection, that you have always shown me! From this hour, I will never mention Valcourt more.

Dup. Did I ask a sacrifice so cruel?

Am. There is no other way, and I am resolved.

Dup. You drive me to extremities! Is it that I may have the pleasure of tormenting that I have advised delay? I act but for your advantage! I have no other views but for your happiness.

Val. Du Pont is happy.

Dup. Then he is singular.

Val. And why should I be unhappy?

Dup. Why? Why? (*turning to* Du Pont *and his wife*) How long have you been married?

M. Du P. Nearly seven years, and have never yet seen an unhappy day, except from poverty; and even then hope and affection softened our grief. By the help of these, we have long supported our wants: for, when affection fills the heart, it always gives courage to the mind.

Dup. Yes, but you suffered?

M. Du P. Being two, we could bear our sufferings.

Val. Such is the language of happy love! and we shall love like them.

Dup. The example is encouraging; still I——

Du P. Fear nothing, Sir, make them happy.

Dup. For a month, that they may all their lives afterward accuse me of having made them wretched.

Val. Our affection is sincere, and will be eternal.

Dup. I feel I am a fool! Do as you will; further resistance is vain. Be married when you please. Only, do not punish me, by suffering me, hereafter, to witness your misery.

Val. Noble and excellent heart!

Du P. Most respectable master!

M. Du P. Heaven shower its blessings on you!

Val. To me you have given life and happiness.

Dup. Do not thus caress and increase my absurd vanity! I would do right, if I knew but how. [*Exeunt Omnes.*

REMARKS.

In this excellent little Comedy the character of Dupré appertains to the misanthropist class; various branches of which have been selected, by various dramatic poets. The discontented man is charmingly drawn; but whether a man, of so much virtue, ever so completely becomes the prey of discontent may be justly doubted. Virtue is the source of cheerfulness, though peculiar personal distress may sour the mind. Neither is it probable that Du Pont could have intercourse with a wife and children, during seven years, unknown to his master and all the family: nor that, living with such a master for twenty years, he should not have better known his heart. But these are licenses which may well be permitted, in the present imperfect state of dramatic poetry; which must attain a high degree of perfection before such little defects become unpardonable. The English stage requires greater variety, but additions and alterations might easily fit this Comedy for our Theatres.

THE AFFECTIONATE SON:

A COMEDY,

IN ONE ACT,

TRANSLATED FROM

THE GERMAN OF J. J. ENGEL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

RHODE, a Villager.

FREDERIC, his Son.

SCHOOLMASTER.

MICHAEL, betrothed to MARGERY.

A SERJEANT, SOLDIERS and PEASANTS.

RACHEL, the Wife of RHODE.

MARGERY, their Daughter.

CATHERINE, the Mother of MICHAEL.

THE AFFECTIONATE SON:

A COMEDY, IN ONE ACT.

SCENE I.

Enter RHODE *from his Cottage, gaping and stretching.*

Rhode.

AH! Ah! Ah! I can't tell why I got up so soon this morning! Not half awake! Yet, when the morning is so fine, who can sleep? If I don't see the sun rise, I am out of humor all day. Yonder it is, just peeping above the earth. How beautiful! What is the majesty of man! That vast dark cloud, with edges of gold! What a delightful morning! Perhaps my son is now up! Heigh ho! Soldiers have not too much sleep: perhaps he looks at the sun, and thinks of his father, as I now think of him, and with the same pleasure. My brave fellow! when thou wert a child, who could have thought thou wouldst have given me such satisfaction?

SCENE II.—*Enter* RACHEL.

Ra. So, husband! Up as usual.

Rhode. To be sure; seeing the sun rise, and thinking of our dear Frederic. What is he just now doing, think you?

Ra. (*afflicted*) Nothing, perhaps! Nothing!

Rhode. Always fretting! Always in fear! We shall see him again, as sure as I have life; for look you, wife, I pray for him every day.

Ra. He is a soldier, and a soldier's life is never safe. Many a salt tear that thought causes. When I hear his letters read, and thou think'st that I cry for joy, ah! 'tis a very different thought. I always remember I may never hear from him more. Then the money that he sends! I never look at it but with an aching heart. The king pays him for his blood, and

he sends it to his father and mother, that they may live in quiet. Ah, husband!

Rhode. Pay him for his blood!

Ra. Yes, indeed, his life-blood!

Rhode. No, good wife, no. If he were in any foreign service, why then, I would not accept a penny of his money. But he serves our good king, to whom and to his country his life and blood are due.

Ra. (*sighing*) I wish it were peace.

Rhode. I am told that it is.

Ra. Told! Ah! people tell more than they know.

Rhode. But there are regiments which are returning from the camp.

Ra. I wish it may be true.

Rhode. You may depend upon it, that we have, or shall have, peace soon; and when our boy shall return to garrison, here in the next town, we can go and see him once a week.

Ra. Twice, husband, three times! once is not enough. Dear, dear! what shall we feel, when we see him again! But we shan't know him, perhaps?

Rhode. Not know my own son?

Ra. In an officer's dress, husband, all laced over, with a ribband and a cross, for thou told'st me he had one.

Rhode. Ay, wife! he has! he has!

Ra. Oh, how I shall like to see how he looks!

Rhode. Looks? How should he look but like a brave soldier! What are his dress and his cross? 'Tis the scars on his forehead! these are the marks of honor! these show where the heart lies.

SCENE III.—*Enter the* Schoolmaster *of the Village.*

School. Good morrow, friends: good morrow. (*presenting each a hand.*)

Rhode. Good morrow, Sir.

School. No news of your son, yet? The month was up yesterday.

Rhode. True. I was in bed last night before our Margery came back: did she bring any thing, wife?

Ra. Yes, and a letter with it: but she is so sound asleep! Must I wake her?

Rhode. The sleepy jade! You need but tell her that I am coming. [*Exit* Rachel.

SCENE IV.

Rhode. Do you know that my son is no longer a captain? he is a colonel!

School. A colonel! Is that possible?

Rhode. We learned it from his last letter, which our curate was good enough to read to us. The matter was this, my friend. My son had always the happiness to be seen by the king, when he distinguished himself in battle; and this was the way that he became an officer, and was honored with the cross, and was made a colonel.

School. But what has he done now? Pray tell me that?

Rhode. You shall hear. In the last battle, near—near—— I never can remember hard names! the regiment was flying; most of the officers were killed, or wounded: my son too was shot in the thigh, but what of that? He called to the men, cursed, and prayed, and at last collected no less than three hundred, (*growing warm*) led them on, fell sword in hand upon the enemy, had his horse killed under him, sprung upon the back of another, and left the field with only fifty followers. The king made him a colonel on the spot, and promised him that should not be all. Yes, my friend, it was my son! my son, that did all this!

School. He's a brave fellow! I saw that when he was my scholar. In all the sports of the boys, he was at their head; and, if they began to fight, he was the first among them. He was his father's own boy.

Rhode. (*delighted*) Ay! Was not he?

SCENE V.—*Enter* RACHEL *and* MARGERY.

Ra. Pray don't scold her! I found her up.

Mar. (*gaping*) Here, father; here is a letter from brother Frederic, with your monthly allowance, twelve crowns.

Ra. Six, child, six.

Mar. (*gaping*) The postmaster said twelve.

Ra. Oh, I guess how it is. He has doubled the sum, because his pay is increased. He has always done more than he was able; has not he, husband?

Rhode. My brave boy! Six were quite enough.

Mar. Then there is the hamper of wine, which that old gentleman, the wine-merchant, with the large nose, brought: (*gaping*) I forget his name. It's in the cottage: the hamper is quite full.

School. (*eagerly*) Quite full? Oh ho!

Rhode. You shall have your part, old friend. We will take a glass now, while you read me the letter. Send us a bottle, wife, and three glasses, with something to eat; and do you, Margery, bring a table and chairs. Make haste.

Ra. (*going*) Don't read the letter till I hear it. Be sure you stay for me.

SCENE VI.

Rhode. Proceed, my friend; we shan't steal the words. I long to know what he says about peace, and whether he will soon be at home.

School. Why there has been much talk of peace, but men are still pressed; and, if peace were signed, they would not want recruits.

Rhode. Do they press still?

School. Don't you know a serjeant and soldiers came to the village yesterday?

Rhode. What, to recruit? Is that possible!

School. Oh, yes. Our youngsters have all got the ague.

Rhode. The blockheads! What are they afraid of? If they're able to serve the king, let them march. Every man must die, as the curate tells us; and what matters whether it be by a bullet or the fever?

School. But suppose it should be your son-in-law, that is to be? He is a fine well made youth. Be on your guard.

Rhode. Oh, never fear: it won't be him.

School. I should hope not.

Mar. (*after bringing a table and chairs, and aside to her father*) Father!

Rhode. Well? What is the matter?

Mar. I want to ask you something.

Rhode. Speak; let me hear.

Mar. Last night, as I was coming back from town, Michael, to whom I am betrothed, was waiting for me at the end of the village, and was vexed that I did not come sooner.

Rhode. And so, to fetch up lost time, you would go and breakfast with him?

Mar. (*blushing*) If you please, father.

Rhode. What, directly! before you have heard the news from your brother? Margery! Margery! I love thee dearly; thou art the youngest we have, and came as it were unexpectedly; (*seriously*) but if thou dost not love thy brother, Frederic, equal even to father or mother——

School. Nay, my friend, she is allowed to love her husband better than her father or mother. Go child, go.

Rhode. Well, well!

Mar. I'll not stay long, father. I'll soon be back. (*to the* Schoolmaster *as she passes*) Thank you kindly, Sir.

SCENE VII.

School. (*opening the letter*) What a fine hand! So neat! So legible! Ay, ay, he was my scholar. Hem! hem! (*reads*) "My dear father——"

Rhode. (*his elbows on the table, and all attention*) My dear, good boy!

School. "Peace being signed, this is the last letter I shall send you from the camp."

Rhode. God be praised! We have peace at last. How my poor Rachel will rejoice!

School. "I send you the money, which you have the goodness to accept from your son."

Rhode. Yes! from my son!

School. "And since my pay is considerably increased, I ask your permission to double the sum."

Rhode. No, boy, no! That must not be. Every thing must have its limits, even thy love for thy parents. Go on, Sir, go on!

School. "I have lately had the greatest pleasure that ever befel me."

Rhode. (*extreme joy*) Indeed! What is it? What is it?

School. "I had the honor to dine with the king at his own table."

Rhode. With the king! At his own table! How were the lords in waiting amazed! Well, go on!

School. "He spoke to me several times, and bestowed more praise upon me than I deserved."

Rhode. (*shaking his head.*) Well, boy, well!

School. "He then asked what family I was of, and who was my father."

Rhode. (*self-satisfied*) So he asked after me! Our good king asked for me! Well, what did he answer? Quick! quick! let me hear.

School. "I told him your name, and that of our village. 'Sire,' said I, 'your subjects are all and equally your subjects, and, if a just, a tender, and a faithful heart be of any worth, I then dare venture to say, you have not a more worthy subject than my father. I am proud and happy to call myself his son; nor would I change for the greatest father on earth! though mine is poor, and not of illustrious descent.'

Rhode. Mercy of Heaven! I hear him speak.

School. 'To him I owe all my probity, and the zeal I have for your service. From an infant, I have ever heard him praise his king, and inspire me with sentiments of courage, and virtue.' "Such, Sir, were my words to his majesty; and to praise you in his presence was pleasure so great, that I could not refrain from tears. (Rhode *wipes his eyes*) Touched by filial affection, the king took his glass and drank your health aloud, and ordered me to assure you of his good will."

Rhode. Is it possible! The king!

School. You hear! The king drank your health!

Rhode. (*half beside himself, runs to the cottage, opens the door, and cries*) Rachel! Rachel! Wife! Come here! make haste!

Ra. (*within*) What is the matter?

Rhode. Make haste, I tell thee!

SCENE VIII.—*Enter* RACHEL.

Rhode. My dear Rachel, bless thee! bless thee, for having given me such a son!

Ra. (*putting breakfast on the table: the* Schoolmaster *begins to eat*) What is the matter, husband? I tremble with joy already. Is it peace?

Rhode. (*speaking rapidly,* Rachel *clapping her hands at every phrase with astonishment*) Peace? oh yes. Our son has dined with the king! at his own table! And the king inquired after our village! and after me! and Frederic told the king I was one of his most faithful subjects! and that he would not change me for all the fathers in the world! Dear, I am half suffocated! And thereupon the king drank my health! before the whole court! and sent to assure me of his good will! And so! And so—we'll drink his majesty's health! Take your glasses! Here, Rachel! Here, my friend! Not that, the largest! Come, chink them round. Take off your hat. His majesty's health! God bless him!

School. } His majesty's health! God bless him!
Ra. }

School. (*wiping his lips*) I declare, the more one drinks the better it is.

Rhode. Look you, my friend, you must now be so good as to write to my son, that I have returned the king's good will, and drunk *his* health! and that he must thank him from me, and assure him of my friendship! He must not forget that.

School. Nay but, hark you, my good friend, that would not be respectful to the king!

Rhode. Not respectful! The king is a man, like you or I, and I don't believe he would think I wanted respect, when he should know that I love him with all my heart!

Ra. But are you sure peace is made?

Rhode. Why it's so in my son's letter!

Ra. (*with tender affection, leaning on* Rhode, *and looking on him with joy*) Then he will come back, husband! We shall see him again: shan't we?

Rhode. Yes! Only have patience, Rachel. I have not heard all the letter.

Ra. If he could but be here at his sister's marriage, it would double our joy.

Rhode. Well, well, patience! My friend will read the remainder. But, first, I must drink my son's health! and thine, Rachel! (*takes a glass himself, and gives her one*) When he was a baby, he was the apple of thy eye. Come! health, happiness, and long life to Frederic!

Ra. (*greatly moved*) Thank you, husband, thank you.

School. (*drinking*) And may he be as good man as his father.

Ra. Thank you, Sir! thank you kindly!

Rhode. Whenever I drink his health, my heart bounds with joy. May Heaven bless him! He who could speak so well of me to the king himself! (*solemnly*) Father of Heaven, to

thee my thanks are due for a son so good, so grateful, who did not blush, although I was obscure and in poverty, to honor his aged father with heart-felt joy. Not from me, but from thee, can he hope for reward!

Ra. Pray, Sir, read the rest of the letter.

School. (*seated beside* Rhode, *and seeking the place, while* Rachel *places herself behind them with the utmost attention: reads*) "At the king's table." Where did I leave off?—"My good will"—ay, that's the place. "I could contain myself no longer, so greatly was I moved: I sprang from my chair, and fell at the knees of the king! 'Sire,' said I, 'of all the favors you have heaped upon me——'

SCENE IX.—*Enter* MARGERY.

Mar. Help! father, help! Help!

Ra. (*terrified*) What is the matter?

Mar. The soldiers! The soldiers!

Ra. (*running to* Margery) Don't be frightened, child. What is the matter?

Mar. As I was coming along with Michael——

School. Oh! That's it—They have carried off Michael.

Ra. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

Rhode. Pressed him after peace is made! There is mystery in this.

School. Peace, indeed! What does peace mean? Kings are always at war! We never can say our children are safe, Heaven help us!

Rhode. Hark you, friend! Say nothing against his majesty. Do we not yoke our oxen every day to the plough? And, if we did not, how should we feed them, or how feed ourselves? A man like you should know better!

Mar. Do, my dear father, get him back: he is your child as well as I, and the serjeant would respect you, because every body respects you.

Rhode. Sweet simpleton! Who knows me, beyond the limits of our village?

SCENE X.—*Enter* CATHERINE, MICHAEL'S *Mother.*

Ca. They have frighened me to death! What will become of me?

Ra. I sincerely pity you! Oh that my son was but here!

Rhode. Nay, nay, peace! Don't be too much alarmed. I am vexed indeed to be thus disturbed, being so happy in the thoughts of my son. It may not be so bad as you imagine. Michael is your only boy, and to take him from the plough—— No, no! That's not right. I'll speak to the serjeant myself.

Mar. I'll go with you, father, and cry and pray. Oh, he can't be so barbarous then as not to let him off.

[*Exeunt* Rhode *and* Margery.

Ra. (*calling after them*) Take care of your father, child: don't let any misfortune happen to him.

SCENE XI.

School. Take the bread from the mouth of a poor widow?

Ca. I am all of a tremble! I can't keep myself still.

School. Sit down, sit down, and take courage. Let us hope for the best.

Ca. Two of my sons were taken before, and I have never again set eyes on them. Now my last is gone.

School. Have patience! All may be well. You know, we are commanded to be patient.

Ra. (*continually on the watch*) Dear, dear, there's a noise in the village! If any thing should come to my poor husband! If he can but govern his temper! Pray, Sir, go and see.

School. I go! I?

Ra. They will be in fear of you, Sir. You are the parish clerk.

School. So much the worse, neighbour: those fellows cannot have better sport than to fall upon us poor churchmen. I'll not meddle. No, no; I know better. They would bid me mind my books, and not their affairs, or may the devil—— God forgive me! what have I said? You see I can't govern my temper, and then who knows what might happen? Had I drunk a glass or two more——

Ra. Nay, but you are our friend; you know, and ought to assist us.

School. Very true; but you must not be unreasonable. It is my office to give you good advice; but as to assistance, that's another thing! You must assist yourselves.

SCENE XII.

Enter RHODE, MARGERY, MICHAEL, *the* Serjeant, Soldiers, *and* Peasants.

Ca. (*running to* Michael) Oh, my boy! They shall take my life before they tear thee from my arms.

Mar. My dear, dear Michael!

Ser. Poh, poh! This means nothing! My pity is not to be moved by clamors.

Rhode. Suffer me to speak to you.

Peas. (*one after another*) Take the youngest son—the only son his mother has left!—That's not according to the king's orders.

Rhode. Be quiet, friends; you may make bad worse.

Ser. Oh, let them alone. The boobies! I carry my orders in my pocket, that is enough for me.

Peas. Your orders! What orders? You have no such orders. The fields must be tilled. The king allows it.

Rhode. (*making them a sign*) Hark you, Mr. Serjeant: good words sometimes prevail.

Ser. Good words? Oh, yes, good words. Let me see the color and weight of your words.

Rhode. I love my king with all my heart! Heaven witnesses my truth. Were not peace concluded, and he no longer in danger, were his affairs such that——

Ser. Pshaw! All that means nothing.

Rhode. Nay, but hear me out.

Ser. (*leaning on his cane*) Well!

Rhode. This young man is promised to my daughter, but no matter: I should be the first to say "Take him, what can he do better than fight for his king and country! Take me too! for, though my hair is grey and my limbs a little stiff, I am neither so old nor so weak but I dare face an enemy. My son, this day, has given me back my youth! While I could hold a sword, I would fight; and, when sinking under age and weakness, still I would encourage the youthful conqueror, with hand, heart, and voice. If I saw a coward fly, I would stand in his road, and he should either return to his duty or leave me dead on the spot!" Yes, were the king in danger, I would tell you all this, Mr. Serjeant.

Ser. And I tell you, old dotard, that you tell me nothing to the purpose.

Rhode. Sir! Are you a soldier?

Ser. (*brutally*) You see I am.

Rhode. By your dress, but not by your words. If you were a soldier, you would delight to hear this of your king.

Ser. (*raising his cane*) You old blockhead! Do you dare—

Peas. No violence, if you please! No violence!

Ra. (*frightened*) Pray, pray, husband, be calm! This does but make things worse.

Rhode. We are well informed that peace is made, and you may repent of all this, Mr. Serjeant. Since you take so much upon you, you may be taught better behaviour. Were I to write to my son, the colonel——

Ser. (*astonished*) How! Your son! A colonel?

Rhode. Colonel Rhode, of the fiftieth regiment, if you know him.

Ser. Is it possible!

Rhode. (*forgetting his anger*) Ay, ay! I see you do! Perhaps you come from the army, Mr. Serjeant, and can relate all the actions of my son? Go home, my friends, go; Mr. Serjeant will take a glass of wine with me.

Ser. With all my heart—Go, and wait till I come. (*they all retire.*)

Rhode. Bring us a fresh bottle, wife: the wine is excellent.

School. That it is! A thousand times too good for that insolent fellow.

SCENE XIII.

Ser. Your son's regiment was the first in which I served: I remember him well. He once almost broke my bones.

Rhode. Ah, ha! Did he so, my dear Mr. Serjeant? Then you are old acquaintance?

Ser. To my sorrow!

Rhode. Come, come, take another glass! So, when he is obliged to strike, he makes himself felt?

Ser. (*after drinking*) I wished him at the devil! Punish a man only for taking a glass or two more than usual!

Rhode. (*filling the* Serjeant's *glass*) I am glad of it.

Ser. (*drinking*) Glad of it?

Rhode. Yes, glad! Glad that you know my son, glad that he resembles me, and glad that we both love order. Come! Drink!

School. (*with an envious eye*) Scoundrel! How it goes down.

Rhode. As you come from the army I suppose, and have served in my son's regiment, you can tell me whether he is on the march to his former garrison, or to some other neighbouring place; and whether I shall see him soon.

Ra. Pray tell us, Mr. Serjeant! To see our son is our only hope.

Ser. I can soon tell you all I know: but first fill my glass.

Rhode. With all my heart! I am glad you think the wine good. 'Twas the present of my son, to comfort my old age.

School. (*as the* Serjeant *drinks*) Would it were poison! He will empty the hamper!

Rhode. Well, but what have you to tell me?

Ser. Why—that your wine is good, and that I would have drunk more, had I not drunk too fast at first: but, were it champagne, and your son ten times a colonel, I must have money, or Michael must march: therefore be quick.

Rhode. Money! From the subjects of the king?

Ser. The king does the same. Why not? If I give Michael back, I must find another; and that requires money. Soldiers don't grow like mushrooms! Thirty dollars, or he must march.

Rhode. Thirty dollars! Where in all the village are they to be found? Here! (*giving the bag*) Here are twelve.

Ser. Twelve! What's that? If you haven't it, his mother must find the money.

Rhode. His mother! She lives upon his labour.

Ra. Do have pity, dear Sir!

Ser. I have pity! Of what?

Ra. Of us all: we must else be so miserable! Of my dear innocent girl, who will never outlive the loss of her betrothed.

Ser. Ha, ha, ha! She is deeply smitten?

Ra. Of the young man's mother, who must perish of hunger when he is gone; for which you will have to repent, on your death-bed.

Ser. Pshaw! we never trouble ourselves about death-bed, pity, and repentance. What would it be if this were an enemy's country? It is then "your money, or death!"

School. Mercy on us!

Ser. Pity, indeed! Talk of breaking legs and arms, cutting down, and tossing on the points of swords.

School. He must have made a compact with Satan! Lord have mercy upon us!

Ser. Ask your son, when he returns: he was no better than the rest; I tell you so. I give a quarter of an hour, after which either money or march, Michael, march! [*Exit.*

SCENE XIV.

Rhode. (*looking at the money*) This money begins to weigh heavy on my heart! Did you hear the wretch, and what he said of my son, too?

Ra. 'Tis false, husband. 'Tis not all that he can say, but what he does, that afflicts me.

School. And me too. You'll hear no such thing from your son.

Rhode. If I should! Have I returned thanks to Heaven and him for money wrung from wretches? Have I enjoyed such pleasure by that which cost others so many tears? The bare possibility is dreadful! Rather may I water the earth with the sweat of my brow for ever! I would not touch a penny! But no; a son so wicked would have begun by despising his father. Come, let us go with Michael part of the way. He will be gone but for a week, or a fortnight: my son will send him back.

Ra. My child will break her heart! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XV.

School. (*returning and eying the bottle*) A week or a fortnight! In that case, why see him on the road? I had better drink this wine than let it spoil. Beside, I want to read the end of this letter. (*looks at the letter which he had held in his hand, and reads*) "Here on the 7th!" (*rises hastily and calls*) Michael! Margery! (*empties his glass, and then runs and calls again*) Neighbours! Neighbour Rhode! Rachel! Come back! How great will be their joy! and mine too.

SCENE XVI.—*Re-enter* RHODE *and* RACHEL.

Rhode. Well! What now? Your face brightens up, neighbour?

School. To be sure! What will you say if I give you back Michael this very day? 'Tis here in the letter.

Rhode. In my son's letter?

School. You will see him this very day.

Rhode. Let me hear! Let me hear!

School. (*reads*) "Our regiment is under orders to return to garrison; the company I command will pass near our village on the 6th." That was yesterday.

Rhode. Can that be possible?

Ra. But he is not come yet.

School. Do but hear. (*reads*) "At the latest, it will be early on the 7th." That is to-day. "And, as I shall then be not a mile from our village, I will pass through it myself, and spend half an hour with you and my dear mother."

Rhode. Oh, my heart! He will soon be here! Let me fly and meet him! Let me once more take him in my arms and cry, "Oh my son! my son!"

Ra. Don't go! I am weak, I cannot run. Wouldst thou have him imagine I love him less than thou dost?

School. Stay where you are, neighbours; only give me the money back: make haste!

Rhode. What to do?

School. To keep the serjeant in play; meantime your son will be here.

Rhode. You are right: take it. Quick! Quick! For my own part, I can think of nothing but my son.

[*Exit* Schoolmaster *hastily.*

SCENE XVII.

Ra. Don't leave me, love! I know not what to do: I am so joyful, and so impatient! Climb upon that woodstack; perhaps you may see him.

Rhode. True. How my blood trickles through my veins!

Ra. (*while* Rhode *is climbing*) Heavens be praised, I shall see him once more! After an absence of so many years! Be still, be still, my heart! Great was my joy when I brought thee into the world, but greater much to-day. Dost see nothing, love?

Rhode. (*on tip-toe*) Not yet: the sun is in my eyes.

Ra. Surely, he will come! Dost see nothing yet?

Rhode. Ha—Yonder—something shines! There they are! in the plain! horses, men, and arms, all at the foot of the mountain! There they are! There they come!

Ra. But Frederic, our son?

Rhode. Patience! he cannot be far off! (Rachel *endeavors to mount the stack*) Stop! Stop! Who comes here? Full gallop! Now entering the village. (*throws up his hat*) 'Tis he! 'Tis Frederic!

Ra. How can I contain myself? (*runs off with out-stretched*

arms; and the exclamations—My son! My mother!—*are heard without.*)

SCENE XVIII.

Re-enter, with FREDERIC: *locked in each other's Arms.*

Fre. (*running*) My father! My honored father!

Rhode. My son! (*embracing again and again*) My son once more! I now feel how weak these arms are: they answer not to my heart! But my tears will tell thee, thou hast a father!

Ra. (*kissing his hand*) Yes, and a mother too, my child! A grateful mother!

Fre. Why mention such a word? Oh, my parents, to whom is gratitude due?

Rhode. Say no more, Frederic! In the face of heaven and earth I can declare, thou hast given more than thou hast received. Thou art the comfort of my old age! Thou givest it health and length of life.

Ra. And joys! countless joys!

Fre. Whose can exceed mine? Could I be happy without my parents' love? Oh, my father! My tender mother! Never have you been forgotten! When most fortunate, my purest pleasure was to share happiness with you: and now, at this very moment, your affection is the most soothing delight of my heart! (*taking the hand of each, and looking first at one, then at the other, greatly moved*) Father! Mother! Never can I look enough! Oh, dry your tears! Recover yourselves! I cannot to-day stay long with you, but you shall soon see me again. How is your health? How do you live? Where is my sister? whom I never have seen since she was a child. Will you call her?

Rhode. I'll run, Frederic, I'll run. (*returning*) My limbs tremble under me. I must first tell thee——

Ra. But for thee, Frederic, she might have been very unhappy.

Rhode. A serjeant has pressed the youth that is to marry her; but luckily they are yet in the village. He expects thirty crowns, which we suffered him to hope would be paid, knowing thou wouldst come. Oh, how happy am I, to see thee once more!

Fre. Bring them here: but do not say who I am, not even to my sister.

Rhode. How can I forbear! I, who wish to shout as I go, "HE IS COME! HE IS COME!"

Fre. (*holding his mother's hand*) How beautiful the country! Now do I recollect the place of my birth, the sports of my youth, and the cottage which I have so often wished to revisit! Yonder we used to sit, with our neighbours! There is

the hill on which we played! Sweet and happy years of infancy! Look where I will, my dear mother, it does but remind me of the tender proofs of your affection. Why do you not speak?

Ra. I cannot! My joy is too great! It overpowers my heart! My tears must give it ease. Beside, I think——

Fre. (*alarmed*) Of what? Why do you grieve?

Ra. You are no longer our equal: you are above us.

Fre. Above! Drive that thought from your bosom. Am not I your son? Are not you my ever dear and respected mother? Is there a heart on earth that loves me like yours? and can I love any one more tenderly than you? (*pressing her in his arms*) Be assured, my affectionate mother, I love you with all my heart and soul, and so have ever loved.

Ra. I believe it, for I know myself. How many nights have I lain weeping, by thy father's side, fearing I should never see thee more.

SCENE XIX.

Enter MARGERY, *running to her Mother, and not noticing* FREDERIC.

Mar. What is the matter, mother, that my father sent me in such haste? (*timidly, seeing* Frederic) An officer!

Fre. (*to his mother*) Is it her? (Rachel *makes a sign, and he goes to kiss his sister*) What a lovely girl!

Mar. (*keeping him off*) Fie, Sir!

Ra. What, to thy brother, Margery?

Fre. How the sweet girl surveys me! Yes, thy brother! and one that thou wilt love, I hope.

Mar. (*with great kindness*) Is this Frederic?

Fre. (*kissing her*) Yes, lovely simplicity!

Mar. (*with great joy*) Oh, mother, then we have nothing to fear!

SCENE XX.

Enter the Serjeant, RHODE, Schoolmaster, MICHAEL, CATHERINE, *and* Peasants.

Rhode. This gentleman, Serjeant, will pay you your thirty crowns.

Ser. (*astonished*) The devil! (*respectfully taking off his hat.*)

[Michael *and* Margery *run to each other: the* Peasants *look with astonishment, and inquire among themselves.*

Rhode. This is my son, friends! Help me to rejoice! I have not half heart enough!

Fre. (*to the* Serjeant) So, you have been using force here, friend? Where are your orders?

Ser. (*trembling*) Here, Sir.

Fre. What company do you belong to?

Ser. The company of Blumenthal.

Fre. (*after looking at the order*) Do you dare act under such authority? I know your general, and know you. What was your project? Was it to extort money from these poor villagers, and, being on the frontiers, then to desert?

Ser. (*supplicating*) I hope, Sir——

Fre. Silence, villain! You have always considered the condition of a soldier as a privilege to commit every outrage. Coward! 'Tis time you should be punished. Bind him, my friends, and seize his comrades. They must be taken before the judge. [*Exeunt some* Peasants, *taking off the* Serjeant.

SCENE *the Last.*

Fre. Come, my young brother and sister, join hands! I will give you a wedding supper, and be one of the happy guests.

Ca. and *Mich.* Oh, Sir!

Peas. (*approaching confidently*) He is a brave gentleman! he does not despise us! A thousand times welcome, noble colonel! We have always been glad to hear of you.

Fre. (*shakes hands with them all, and with the* Schoolmaster, *who makes low bows.*)

Rhode. All that I see delights me, boy; and still more what I have just heard. Assuredly thou hast always acted like a brave and worthy man.

Fre. Always, my father: or I should ill have followed the lessons you and my mother gave. There is no place at which they can speak ill of me, but many I hope in which they bless my memory. (*looking at his watch*) But I have no more time; I must join my company.

Ra. What, so soon, my son?

Rhode. We have scarcely seen thee!

Fre. My dear parents, I must go; but you will have my heart, wherever my duty calls! Might I ask one favor, before I depart?

Rhode. } Every thing! Every thing!
Ra. }

Fre. Come then and live with me: my heart is yours, so let my house be, and all that I possess!

Rhode. } (*disturbed*) Dear child!
Ra. }

Fre. Nay, if you could not be happy, what should I be?

Rhode. We are old, Frederic; suffer us to die, where we have lived; in this cottage, where thou wert born, and which is become so dear to our hearts! Only come often and see us; that is all we ask.

Fre. Of that be assured.

Ra. And we will come to thee. Those will be happy days! Going and coming, every step we take, we will humbly offer thanks to Heaven for having given us such a son!

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

REMARKS.

This is a delightful little piece to read. The praise of powerfully affecting the heart, by entering into its familiar and domestic emotions, has frequently been deserved by the dramatic authors of Germany; and by few more effectually than Engel, in the present instance. The piece has another valuable merit, to the English reader: it exhibits a practice, very common in the German states, and especially in Prussia where the scene is supposed to pass, of seizing on the villagers, not only as the government allows, when the army wants recruits, but under false pretences, and counterfeit orders, by recruiting serjeants, and others, against whose villainy they have no redress. This surely is one of the abominable practices, which should impress upon the hearts of Englishmen the happy blessings of freedom. Not having a copy of the original German, the present translation is made from the XIIth volume of *Le Nouveau Théatre Allemande.*

THE PULLET:

A DRAMATIC PROVERB,

IN ONE ACT,

TRANSLATED FROM

THE FRENCH OF CARMONTEL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

D'ORVILLE.

FRÉMONT, a Physician.

LA BRIE, } Footmen to M. D'Orville.
COMPTOIS, }

THE PULLET:

A DRAMATIC PROVERB*, IN ONE ACT.

SCENE I.

A Bedchamber: M. D'ORVILLE, *with a Morning Gown and Cap, ill;* COMPTOIS *and* LA BRIE.

D'Orville.

AH! This last medicine has made me very weak; and very hungry. Is the boiled chicken ready, La Brie?

La B. You'll have it presently, Sir.

D'Or. Why are not you gone for it, Comptois?

Com. I have been helping you up, Sir. The cloth shall now be laid.

D'Or. These fellows are so slow! Is not one of you enough for all you are doing? Pray, make haste.

Com. Presently, Sir; presently. [*Exit.*

D'Or. I am dying with inanition. Hunger inclines me to sleep. Give me the great chair. (*sits*) Come, come: bring my dinner.

La B. There, Sir; there is the table just before you. (*spreads the cloth*) I'll go and fetch some bread.

D'Or. How tedious they are!

La B. Here is your napkin, Sir. Spread it on your lap. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

D'Or. Hunger and weakness make me sleepy. I can't keep awake. (*he falls gradually asleep.*)

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* The French Proverb is—*Le battu paye l'Amende*; He that's beaten pays the Penalty.

SCENE III.

Enter La Brie *with Bread and Wine; and* Comptois *presently afterward with a boiled Pullet.*

La B. Here is bread and wine.

Com. And here is the pullet. Hey day! he is fallen fast asleep.

La B. It is not long since I left him.

Com. His pullet will be cold: wake him.

La B. I indeed? No, no! Not to be scolded.

Com. What shall we do?

La B. I don't know. We shall not dine till I know not what hour, and I am plaguy hungry.

Com. And so am I. I'll e'en venture to wake him.

La B. It will be in vain; you know how he sleeps.

Com. Sir! Sir!

La B. You must call much louder.

Com. How vexatious! Cut up the fowl, that when he awakes he may begin.

La B. It will then be cold. I'll not touch it.

Com. Then I will. (*he cuts off a leg*) How good it smells!

La B. I don't want a good smell to make me more hungry.

Com. 'Dsblood, I——I've a great mind to eat this leg. M. Frémont, the physician, ordered him to eat only a wing; and perhaps my master will not miss it. (*begins to eat*) How nice it is! Give me a glass, I'll wash it down. (*eats and drinks.*)

La B. Suppose he should wake?

Com. He can but turn me away.

La B. Nay, if that's the case, he can do no more to me; so give me t'other leg.

Com. With all my heart; you will then be as bad as myself, and he won't know which to turn away first.

La B. Where is the bread?

Com. Here.

La B. You are very right, it is good indeed! And good meat requires good drink.

Com. Here is wine. I am thinking, since my master must only eat a wing, I cannot be worse off than I am, so I may as well eat the other. Hold, I'll put his wing on his plate. (*eats.*)

La B. You are right. Give me the body.

Com. What; all? No, no: that's too much; there's the rump. (*they eat.*)

La B. That's not so much as the wing.

Com. Eat, man, eat.

La B. And drink too.

Com. Here's thy health.

La B. And here's thine. (*they drink.*)

Com. This wine is as good as the pullet. What! Have you picked the bones of the body?

La B. Yes, faith.

Com. Oh, ho! Then I must eat the other wing.

La B. Nay, nay, zounds!

Com. Oh, your humble servant, Sir: I'll have my share.

La B. What a glutton!

Com. Ha, ha, ha! That's very good! Come, another glass.

La B. With all my heart.

Com. And, now, what the devil shall we do, when he wakes?

La B. I don't know. Let us drink to clear our heads.

Com. The wine is all gone.

La B. All! What will the housekeeper say, when she sees the bottle empty?

Com. And the bare bones of the pullet?

La B. Say? Let her say what she pleases. Hush! He begins to stir.

Com. What shall we do? What tale shall we invent?

La B. I have it. Put all the bones on his plate, and confirm what I shall say.

Com. Never fear that.

La B. Hush!

D'Or. (*rubbing his eyes*) What are you both standing there about?

La B. Sir, we're waiting on you. Rince my master's glass, Comptois, and give him some water.

D'Or. What is the reason, rascals, that you don't bring my pullet?

La B. Your pullet, Sir!

D'Or. Yes, Sir; I have been waiting for it these two hours!

La B. Waiting, Sir! You are pleased to joke.

D'Or. How so? What do you mean?

La B. Nay, Sir, if you will but be kind enough to look on your plate——

D'Or. What is all this?

La B. Do you forget that you have eaten it?

D'Or. I!

La B. Yes, Sir.

Com. My master has slept since.

D'Or. This is very strange! I eaten it!

La B. Every morsel, Sir; as you may see.

D'Or. What, the whole! This is incomprehensible! I am dying of hunger.

Com. No wonder, Sir. The physic you took was very strong, and you had nothing on your stomach.

D'Or. Give me a glass of wine, however.

La B. Lord, Sir, you have emptied the bottle: we never saw you have such an appetite before!

D'Or. It must be so, since I am as hungry as ever.

Com. Oh, Sir, it was the physic. Shall I give you a glass of water?

D'Or. For what?

Com. Only to rince your mouth, because then we can go to dinner.

D'Or. (*takes the water*) I cannot conceive all this!

La B. (*to* Comptois) What will the housekeeper say now?

SCENE IV.—*Enter* M. Fremont, *the Physician.*

La B. (*announcing him*) Monsieur Frémont.

Fré. Well, Sir, how has the draught operated?

D'Or. Oh, it has given me the devil of an appetite!

Fré. So much the better: it has cleansed the stomach.

Com. That is what we told my master, Sir.

D'Or. But I am so plaguy hungry.

Fré. How so? have not you eaten the wing of a chicken, as I ordered?

La B. Lord, Sir, my master has eaten a whole pullet.

Fré. (*angry*) How! A whole pullet?

Com. And drunk his bottle of wine.

Fré. A bottle of wine and a pullet!

D'Or. And I am now absolutely dying of hunger!

Fré. Hungry still? Have you no more command of yourself than that?

D'Or. I really am just as hungry as if I had eaten nothing.

Fré. I am amazed, Sir, at your indiscretion! I blush for you! Your bowels will be finely irritated!

D'Or. But, Sir, consider.

Fré. I order you the wing of a pullet, and you—— Really, Sir, if you are so intemperate, I must give you up as a patient.

D'Or. Nay, I request——

Fré. From this hour, you must take nothing but water-gruel for a week.

D'Or. Dear Sir——

Fré. That and chicken broth.

D'Or. Water-gruel and chicken broth!

Fré. Or expect an inflammation of the bowels: a mortification. It would be more to my credit were I never to visit you again.

D'Or. Surely, Sir, you will not give me up?

Fré. Unless you strictly observe this regimen.

D'Or. Water-gruel?

Fré. And chicken broth.

D'Or. Nay——

Fré. Oh, you refuse? Good day, Sir.

D'Or. No, no; I obey. Go, both of you, and let some be made directly.

La B. Yes, Sir,

Fré. Not for to-day: Nothing but barley-water to-day.

D'Or. Barley-water?

Fré. And a clyster.

D'Or. You'll not forsake me then?

Fré. On these conditions.

D'Or. I'll do whatever you desire, but you must give me your word to come again. (*following the physician off.*)

Fré. Not till I see how you behave. [*Exeunt Omnes.*

DRAMATIC BIOGRAPHY.

ANECDOTES OF MADEMOISELLE CLAIRON.

(*Continued from Vol. II. p.* 127.)

BY this perseverance, which was so remarkable, the age of *Mlle. Clairon* considered, she obtained her desire, was introduced to the actors of the Italian comedy, obtained her free admission, and appeared on that stage before she was completely twelve years of age.

She was received with applause: her mother became, at length, highly vain of her daughter's talents; music, dancing, Italian, and other necessary accomplishments, were taught her; and her diligence in study, and consequent progress, were surprising.

She left the Italian company, and went with her mother to Rouen, where she was kindly received, and from thence to other provincial towns, remaining in the country about three years, when she returned once more to Paris. The parts that she chiefly played in the country were chamber-maids; but in the company of *La Noue* she had also performed a few second parts in tragedy, and *Sarazin* predicted her future fame, so that at the latter end of her provincial career she had determined only to play principal tragic parts.

On her return to Paris, she knew but five of these, and that small number she had not played often. She was informed that the laws of the theatre in this city required a combination of talents, and especially that she should be able to sing and dance; on which she makes the following reflection: "The "actors of the present day seem to prove, by their con- "duct, that, however small their talents, applause and re- "ward are their due; and that comedies are written for them. "In my time, we were persuaded that we were no more than "the servants of comedy; our efforts and our zeal were un- "abating, and, though the first actors at that time did not en- "joy the fourth of what many indifferent performers at pre- "sent receive, the public were in my opinion better enter- "tained."

When she made her first appearance, it was with difficulty that she was allowed to perform a principal part; they would have persuaded her to be content with one of a second order: she, on the contrary, chose *Phédre*; and, when they thought this choice ridiculous, for it was nothing less than the part in which *Mlle. Dumesnil* obtained the greatest applause, *Mlle. Clairon* replied, as she says, with all the tranquillity and majesty she could assume: "Gentlemen, you either wish me to "appear, or you do not: I have the right to choose my part, "and it shall be *Phédre*, or none."

In this part she consequently appeared; and her success at first, as well as during the twenty-two years she remained on the stage, was so great, that by many of the best judges she was always considered as the finest actress of her age. It was in consequence of disputes with the comedians, cabals, ill-usage, and even imprisonment for some days, that she was induced to quit the stage so early. She speaks of the degradation into which, in her opinion, the art of acting has fallen with great disapprobation and regret.

In relating her excursion to Bordeaux, she gives an account of the change of manner which she there made in performing, and which entirely corresponds with the extract given

from Marmontel, in the first volume of this work *. A most flattering testimony is made in her favor under the head *Déclamation*, in the grand French *Encyclopédie*. Had not her fame been well established, the authors of that work would scarcely have risked such a step.

A remarkable and comic incident, which superstition might deem prophetic of her future fortune, happened at her baptism. At the small town where she was born, it was the custom, in carnival time, to assemble at the houses of the rich, and there dance and feast in masquerade. The curate, far from disapproving these pleasures, acted like his parishioners. *Mlle. Clairon* was a child of seven months, and it was feared that she might die before she could be baptised; they therefore hastily wrapped her up warm, and carried her to church; but the doors were shut, it was carnival time, and not so much as the sexton could be found. The midwife was informed that all the town were that day feasting at the house of a rich inhabitant: thither the infant was carried, and the curate, in a harlequin dress, with his assistant in that of a pantomime clown, performed the ceremony of baptism on the spot.

The memoirs, which Mlle. Clairon has written of her life, contain many curious particulars, which will be gradually given; particularly one of them, in the next number, it being very remarkable, of a lover's ghost, by which she was haunted.

THE ART OF ACTING.

(*Continued from Vol.* II. *No.* VIII. *p.* 140.)

CHAP. VII.

HAMLET having spoken his soliloquy in the first act, Horatio, Bernardo, and Marcellus, enter. The purpose of the following scene ought to be thoroughly understood and impressed upon the minds of all the actors, especially Hamlet and Horatio: it is to repeat and receive an account of the apparition. The earnest-

* Page 271.

ness and the wonder with which it ought to be recited and received cannot sufficiently be described. Every word that Horatio says ought to be perfectly articulate. While he is telling the story, the ghost ought to be present in imagination: Horatio should fear the truncheon that he describes as so near his eyes; and, when the spirit is about to speak, but vanishes at the crowing of the cock, his soul should be all amazement.

The short questions of Hamlet should denote the state of his mind: he should pause to consider, should show himself not apt to believe childish tales, and the earnestness with which he hears the narration confirmed makes him again reflect, deeper, and deeper, till he last exhibits extreme astonishment. Observe, the earnestness of Macellus and Bernardo ought perfectly to correspond with that of Horatio. If the actors do not see the ghost, and become under a perfect delusion by the working of their own imagination, they cannot convey the true sensations to the audience. I know how difficult this is; I know it cannot be expected that inferior actors should possess all the fine feelings necessary for the scene, and I therefore know the world must not hope to see Hamlet perfectly acted.

The suspicions excited in the mind of Hamlet, and expressed in the two lines after the departure of his friends, are thoughts that rush upon him; and it should be evidently seen that they were not in his mind before this scene. Two popular suspicions are admirably expressed: first, that, if a spirit walk, it can only be because the living being had received some mortal injury; and next, that foul deeds or murders cannot be concealed!

It should be observed that Hamlet has a partiality for Horatio, which should be marked by the actor; but that the deep friendship, which he afterward expresses, is planted and confirmed by the conduct of Horatio in the affair of the ghost, or at least that the text of Shakspeare authorizes this conjecture.

The next scene consists of Laertes, Ophelia, and afterward Polonius. It has never been supposed that Laertes wanted understanding, but few actors consider him as possessed of that superior mind which Shakspeare has given him. His advice to

his sister is peculiarly marked by sagacity and tender affection.

It requires great feeling and knowledge of the human mind, in an actress, only to ask the short question of Ophelia—

No more but so?

Those words should express surprise and regret, with the utmost simplicity and purity of heart. These two characters, Laertes and Ophelia, at once develop themselves.

Polonius is a character, perhaps, as difficult to describe as it is to act: for, though drawn by Shakspeare, it is not entirely consistent with itself. His advice to Laertes is a code of wisdom to a youth beginning his travels, and is no less excellent in choice of expression than in sagacity.

Laertes being gone, Polonius, though his advice to Ophelia be equally good, yet gives evident marks of garrulity; but they are no more than touches which, like a gradation of lights in a picture, harmonize with what is to come, but not with that sound understanding with which he spoke to Laertes. On the stage, he has generally been exhibited with complete marks of imbecility, which is totally departing from truth and character: he is garrulous in the extreme, and weak enough to imagine, in his future scenes, that to quibble and play upon words is wit, of which he is absurdly vain. He is ridiculous also, but not a driveller; on the contrary, he afterward frequently displays marks of sagacity. Except in the first scene, his character is excellently preserved. The intention of this scene should also be well comprehended by the performers: it is to let the audience perceive, in Laertes, a perfect gentleman, high-spirited and full of honor; in Ophelia, a fine understanding and sweetness of sensibility, aud to make it known that there is love between her and Hamlet.

The next scene is, where Hamlet and his friends appear to watch the coming of the ghost. The anxiety of Hamlet about the hour denotes the subject that occupies his thoughts: it should be seen to weigh upon his mind; and, while he talks of other things, his eye, his looking round, his absent manner, and every gesture, should make the audience perceive that he

is thinking only of the ghost. If his alarms and apprehensions be well pourtrayed when no spirit is present, how admirably natural and real do they become when it appears! This is the secret which actors want, when they vainly endeavour to give effect to the famous apostrophe of Hamlet, addressing the ghost. Unless the actor keeps, as it were, feeding his mind with fear, he finds it absolutely impossible to conjure any up when it is wanted to the utmost excess.

When I say fear, I do not mean pusillanimity, any thing that denotes the fears of a coward; they would be worse than ridiculous, they would be disgusting. But every thing that astonishment can express, intermingled with wild and strange curiosity, and tempered only by profound filial respect, should be shown by Hamlet. It requires that the actor should work up his imagination to the complete enthusiasm of the poet, before he can deliver his first speech to the ghost.

Extreme Astonishment. Angels and ministers of grace, defend us! (*solemn pause.*)

Breathless. Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,

Desperate curiosity, but solemn. Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,

Mingling doubt. Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,

Climax of solemn hope. Filial tears. Again a solemn appeal.
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee! (*pause*) I'll call thee *Hamlet!*
King!! Father!!!—Royal Dane, oh, answer me!

Extreme curiosity. Let me not *burst* in ignorance, but tell

Amazement. Why thy canonized bones, hears'd in death,

Increasing amazement.
Have burst their searments; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath op'd his *ponderous* and *marble jaws*

Solemn articulation. To cast thee up again? What may this mean—

Continued astonishment. That thou, *dead corpse*, again in complete steel,

Dreadful recollection.
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous, and we fools of nature
So *horridly* to shake our disposition
With thoughts *beyond* the reaches of our souls?

Most ardent inquiry. *Say, why* is this? *Wherefore? What should we do!*

In this speech, the words being every one of an emphatical nature, the particles excepted, I have only put a few in Italics, all of which require a peculiar degree of force and passion. There should be a sudden transition, at the word "father," from amazed and horrid curiosity to the tenderest degree of affection; after which there should be a pause, with a solemnity of manner, with increasing astonishment, to learn how all the miracles which are recapitulated could possibly happen. At the words

What may this mean?

the passion somewhat abates, or rather is of an inferior nature, but still full of amazement, till the last line, which should be delivered with uncommon ardor, intermingled with something like command. If it be so delivered, it will again rekindle all the feelings of the audience.

Hamlet, having spoken, and witnessing the solemn action of the ghost, is fixed in astonishment, totally deaf to what his companions say. His next line—

It will not speak, then I will follow it:—

in the first half should be surprise mingled with dissatisfaction, and the latter half should only declare his resolution, carefully avoiding to give it as an answer to his companions, to whom he could not listen, he was so moved and so intent on the action of the ghost. Afterward, indeed, he reasons with them, but it should be with most impassioned fortitude. As he proceeds, his resolution becomes desperate, and is indeed so fine an opportunity for rant, since it requires all the exertion that can be given it, that the worst of actors here seldom fail to obtain applause, though perhaps to speak the last line as it ought to be is a task that can only be executed by the masters of the stage; I mean, the sudden transition, the calm, dignified, yet half desperate fortitude of—

Go on——I'll follow thee.

He re-enters in the same spirit. His resolution should be marked in the command—

Speak! I'll go no further.

When the ghost declares he must return to sulphurous and tormenting flames, Hamlet freezes with horror; nor is there any part in the whole play in which an actor can better demonstrate his powers of feeling and imagination than while he listens to the dreadful tale of the ghost.

When it disappears, he stands as if just awaked from a horrid dream, examining whether it be or be not real. He recollects it is, and then his exclamations burst with violence from him. Having called on heaven and earth, he asks with real astonishment—

What else?

He then couples hell, pauses in a wild frenzy, and exclaims,

Oh fie!——

He shows his imagination is oppressed, and then makes a fine transition, by an affectionate and filial recollection of the ghost, which he dwells upon with most emphatical ardor, thinking of his mother with painful anguish, or rather agony, and of his uncle with horrid abhorrence.

In these thoughts he is so deeply sunk that he hears not the calling of his companions. He pronounces the short line—

So be it——

not in answer to them, but the firmness of recollection of the dreadful memorandum he has made; and, when the noise comes louder upon him, he starts from his dream, recovers himself, shows that most admirable presence of mind which all his transitions denote, and which belongs only to men of high genius, and calls,

Hillo! ho, ho, boys! Come, bird, come—

with a wild sedateness that must give delight whenever it is well expressed.

The remainder of the act passes in an ardent struggle with his feelings; and the most serious desire, and injunction to his companions, that no tales of the night's adventure should get abroad.

(*To be continued.*)

ESSAY ON DRAMATIC COMPOSITION.

(*Continued from Vol.* II. *No.* VII. *p.* 50.)

IN tracing the history of the unities, and of the causes that have so long made them fashionable, we cannot but discover how strongly human vanity has acted, on this subject. At the commencement of dramatic exhibitions among the Greeks, we find, from the tragedies they have left us, that complication of incident was wholly unnecessary. It may be presumed that a complicated story would not then have been understood, by the populace; and therefore that it would have failed. To excite terror appears to have been the thing, at this early period, the most essential. It was also necessary to be very explanatory, and for that purpose chiefly was the chorus invented.

As the people became more accustomed to dramatic exhibitions, incidents became somewhat more frequent; still however to multiply them, and render the plot intricate, does not appear then to have been required, as it is at present.

Aristotle, when he wrote his critical code, established laws which were popular at the time, and supported their authority by the examples of the great poets whom the Greeks admired. Had he lived in our time, and had the volumes of Shakspeare been open to him, he could not but have discovered that the sources for moving the passions are of a much wider extent, and more grand.

After the revival of letters, when it was the general ambition, among persons of literary attainment, to display a knowledge of the dead languages, those who knew Greek, sufficiently to read Aristotle, were eager to publish this knowledge, and to assert rules which they took for granted were infallible. Aristotle, being a man of comprehensive mind, had multiplied his arguments, in support of the truth of his critical rules; and these arguments were detailed, in later times, with most dogmatical pomp. They were repeated through all Europe, by the

writings of the learned; and echoed, from mouth to mouth, by their admirers.

In the year 1514, when the dramatic art was little understood, the famous Trissino, at the court of Leo X, wrote his tragedy of Sofonisba professedly upon the Greek model; and as this tragedy possessed much greater merit than the pieces that were then current, either in Italy or the rest of Europe, it was supposed, by the vulgar of literature, that he succeeded so well because he had observed the unities. Hence the prejudices in their favor increased, and those who assumed the office of criticism declaimed more forcibly in their favor.

Among the English, Ben Jonson, finding he could not equal the splendid and immortal genius of Shakspeare, and being himself well studied in the Greek and Latin poets, endeavored to persuade himself and his admirers that he excelled the poet he vainly endeavored to rival by his learning, and his adherence to the unities. As he was a man of great judgment and vigor of mind, his authority was of the more weight.

The progress toward refinement of the French stage was somewhat later than that of the English. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the learned in France complained grievously of the neglect of the unities: they ought rather to have complained of the dearth of genius.

At the persuasion of *Chapelain*, and by the aid of the *Comte de Fiésque*, who was a particular favorite with the comedians, it was Cardinal *de Richelieu* that first prevailed on them to accept a piece, written according to these then unfashionable rules. *Desmarets*, the favorite poet of the cardinal, was employed; and, in the year 1629, he produced his Sofonisba. The tragedy of *Trissino* had been twice before translated, by *Marmet* and *Saint Gélais*, and is allowed to have furnished materials for that of *Desmarets*. Sofonisba was successful, and still more so *Les Visionnaires*, a comedy, by *Desmarets*, who was protected, and as it is said assisted in the writing of this comedy, by the cardinal.

Thus did *Desmarets* and the unities suddenly become in fashion; and so plausible are the arguments in favor of the

latter, and so great the authorities by which they are supported, that the courage to inquire into their nature and utility has almost been lost. In France, especially, if a man express the least doubt on the subject, he is but the scoff of all who pretend to have read *Boileau*, *Racine*, and *Molière*, or even to have heard their names.

In Germany, where the dramatic art rose the latest into notice, Gottsched, a man of narrow talents but extreme vanity, raised the cry in favor of the unities. On this subject, observations so excellent have been made, by a German critic, that I cannot do better than transcribe them.

"It were to be wished that Mr. *Gottsched* had never interfered in the theatre: his pretended reform extends either to trifles, below attention, or attacks that which a sound understanding reveres.

"I grant that the German stage was in a deplorable state when the company of Madam *Neuber* was first in vogue. Our political and heroic dramas were a mass of absurdities, obscenities, and confusion. Our comedies consisted in disguises and incantations; and a blow on the back, or flour thrown in the face, were the current jokes of the stage.

"No effort of mind is necessary to discover such abuses; neither was Mr. *Gottsched* the first by whom the discovery was made, though he imagined that he alone had the power to produce a reform. He could read a little French, began to translate, and prompted all who knew how to rhime, and so much as to say *oui Monsieur*, to translate also.

"His tragedy of Cato was composed by the employment of scissars and paste; it is a pity that he employed neither, in the composition of many other of his wretched pieces. He pronounced anathemas against extemporary dialogue, and solemnly drove harlequin from the stage, by a piece which was the most completely a harlequinade that was ever performed. Briefly, he rather desired to be a reformer than a creator.

"But what reform did he produce? A servile imitation of the French. He ought to have perceived that our manners, and taste, have a greater conformity with those of the English,

than with the French : that we wish to see more, and to think deeper, than is the custom in the compositions of France. The melancholy, the grand, and the terrible, act with more certainty, upon our passions, than the tender and the formal. We are better pleased by a complication of incidents, than by pieces the purpose of which are immediately perceived.

" These reflections should have naturally led him immediately to the English stage. It is in vain to urge, he has profited by that also; witness his Cato. The preference which he has given, to this tragedy of the English, evidently proves that he saw only with French eyes; and that he had little or no knowledge of Shakspeare, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and others, from the study of whom his false pride afterward was a preventive.

" Had he given us the masterly works of Shakspeare, with a few alterations, his success would have been far greater than by an attempt to make us suddenly familiar with *Corneille* and *Racine*. The first would have been much the most to our taste, and would have acted far better, as a stimulus, than both the others. Invention is much more easily excited, by the genius who appears to be wholly indebted to nature, than by him who walks in all the painful trammels of art.

" Judging by the models which the ancients have left us, *Shakspeare* is a much greater poet than *Corneille*; though the latter was well acquainted with the ancients, which the former was not. The one understands their rules, the other equals them in the grand essentials of the art. *Shakspeare* attains the high end of tragedy, though by irregular and even capricious steps. *Corneille* but rarely reaches it, although he follows the beaten track. Except the *Œdipus* of *Sophocles*, no tragedies whatever so strongly move the passions as those of *Shakspeare*. *Corneille* has never in any degree equalled the sensations produced by *Zaire:* yet *Zaire* is far below *Othello*, because the author has not dared to follow him whom he imitated.

" It would not be difficult to prove that our ancient German pieces had much in them of the English taste. The famous piece of Doctor Faustus contains many scenes that breathe the

genius of Shakspeare. A friend of mine, who preciously hoards a sketch of that tragedy, which once was so popular and still has its admirers, has furnished me with a scene from it, which the reader may be pleased to see. It is known that Faustus, long famed as the inventor of the typographic art, was accused by the monks of the practice of magic. He is supposed to be in want of a swift demon, and to begin his conjurations: obedient to his powerful voice, instead of one, seven demons appear.

"*SCENE*—FAUSTUS *and seven infernal Spirits.*

Faus. Are you seven the most prompt and swift of the spirits of hell?

Om. Yes.

Faus. Not equally so?

Om. No.

Faus. Which is the most?

Om. I.

Faus. Seven devils, and but six liars! A miracle! Let me hear more, and know ye better.

1*st Dev.* All in good time! At present we can stay no longer. What is thy demand?

Faus. Thy name; thy degree of promptitude?

1*st Dev.* I could give the proof sooner than the answer.

Faus. Behold! What is my act?

1*st Dev.* Thou hurriest thy finger through the flame.

Faus. It doth not burn. Away! Pass seven times through the flames of hell, without burning! Art thou astound? Devils, I find, can be braggarts: 'twere pity couldst thou not be guilty of the least of vices. (*to the* 2*d*) How art thou called?

2*d Devil.* *Chil*, or in thy verbose tongue *The arrows of pestilence.*

Faus. What promptitude is thine?

2*d Dev.* My name declares.

Faus. Away! Be the lacquey of physicians; thou art too slow for me. (*to the* 3*d*) How art thou called?

3*d Dev.* *Dilla*, or *Borne on the wings of the wind.*

Faus. (*to the* 4*th*) And thine?

4*th Dev.* *Jutta*, or *Swift as the rays of light.*

Faus. Weak wretches, whose promptitude may be expressed by finites.

5*th Dev.* Cease thy wrath! they're but the messengers of Satan to the material world; we for the world of spirits. Speak!

Faus. How swift art thou?

5th Dev. As thought of man.

Faus. That's something!—The thoughts of man are not all swift: when truth and virtue call, how slow they come—When thou wilt, thou canst be prompt; but who shall answer for thy will? No. I'll not confide in thee, more than in myself——Ah!——(*to the 6th*) Speak thou! Tell me thy promptitude. How great is it?

6th Dev. As the vengeance of the revenger.

Faus. The revenger! What revenger?

6th Dev. Th' Omnipotent! the terrible! He that preserves vengeance to himself, for the greatness of the pleasure.

Faus. Devil; thou blasphemest! Dost tremble? Quick, say'st thou, as the vengeance of——his name was on my lips!—here let it not be profaned! —Quick as his vengeance?—Still I live—Still I sin——

6th Dev. That thou liv'st and sin'st is food for his vengeance.

Faus. Heard I this from a devil! But 'tis the first time——No no, his vengeance is not swift. Since thou art not more prompt, be gone. (*to the 7th*) Thy rapidity? Speak!

7th Dev. Mortal, hard to satisfy, if mine cannot——

Faus. Speak, I say! How swift?

7th Dev. As the passage from good to ill.

Faus. Ah! Thou art he! As the passage from good to ill! Rapid! Rapid!—Be gone the rest—as the passage from good to ill! I know how prompt it is! Alas, I've proved it."

The reasoning of the above German critic is just, and in my opinion conclusive. The scene which he has adduced, in proof, is a fine specimen of the genuine powers of poetry; which powers ought to be unrestrained. They should be rapid as the passage from good to ill, and their powers remain as unlimited as infinitude itself; for such is the very nature of thought, and especially of poetic thought.

(*To be continued.*)

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE GERMAN STAGE.

(*Continued from Vol.* II. *No.* VII. *p.* 54.)

IN 1776, a theatre was established, at the court of Gotha, which deserves to be noticed; as being, at the time, one of the

most distinguished in Germany. It is much to be regretted, for the progress of the dramatic art, that it subsisted but three or four years.

The year 1777 merits also to be remembered, for the encouraging steps which were taken at Vienna; as well in promising that the receipt of the third representation, of every new piece, should be set apart for the author, as for the lively interest which both prince and people took, in the encouragement of the dramatic art.

Brockmann, one of our most famous living actors, [1782] belonging to the imperial company of Vienna, toward the end of the year 1777, performed at Berlin. So great was the pleasure that he gave, in the part of Hamlet, (from a tragedy so called, imitated after Shakspeare) that the play was performed twelve times in three weeks: a very extraordinary thing, in Germany, where a piece has rarely more than three or four consecutive representations; the number of spectators being by no means so considerable as at Paris, or at London. So enchanted were the people of Berlin, by this actor, that they did him an honor which no other German actor hitherto ever received. Abrahamson, a celebrated artist of Berlin, struck a medal; on one side of which was seen the bust of Brockmann, with these words:

Brockmannus Actor utriusque Scenæ potens:

and on the reverse—

Peragit tranquilla potestas quod violenta nequit.
Berolini, 1 Januarii 1778.

On the 16th of June, 1778, as we have before said, the theatre lost Eckhof, the model of German actors. The honors that were rendered him, after death, are a proof of the esteem in which men of talents are held in Germany; especially when, like Eckhof, they are men of virtue.

There was no theatrical performance till the 18th, when the whole company appeared in mourning on the stage of Gotha, which was hung with black. Mr. Bock, who was appointed director after the death of Eckhof, appeared at their head, and pronounced the following short oration, written by Mr. Reichard, author of the Theatrical Journal and Almanac:

"Patrons and Friends,

"A melancholy but sacred duty brings us, thus in a body, "before you; it bids us weep for our comrade, our master, and "our father! Eckhof is no more. He is gone! He, who, in "the infancy of the German stage, when it but ressembled a "wandering tribe among the first races of men, beginning but "in barbarity, subjected to the yoke of ancient prejudices; he, "who taught order to rise out of this confusion, and led us into "the paths of glory! He it was who improved the talents of "the old, formed those of the young, and gave encouragement "to all, by offering in himself a model of such perfection! "Eckhof is no more. He is gone, where probity and virtue "receive their best reward! Of this probity, this virtue, "here, on these boards, what energetic lessons did he nightly "give! How did his private conduct still more divinely in-"struct!

"He is now before the tribunal of posterity, by which severe "and incorruptible judge his talents will be appreciated, and "will be found as pure and unmixed as man may hope! To "futurity his memory will be sacred. We come not here to "repeat his eulogium: he wants it not. It is the prerogative "of fine talents, and of estimable men, but to be named in "order to make their loss felt. We come to render a public "and solemn testimony, the truth of which we have so lively "a cause to feel, of the loss which the dramatic art, and the "German stage, have suffered. The curtain will one day "drop for each of us: the part of every man must end. May "we all, not only as actors, but as citizens, men, and Chris-"tians, finish our career like the man we mourn."

After this discourse, mournful music, composed by Mr. Schweitzer, was heard; and on the 19th he was interred, at the expence of the Free-masons' lodge (*Zum Rautenkranz*) of Gotha, the members of which had asked permission to bestow this honor on their deceased speaker, and brother. The members of the lodge followed the coffin in procession.

(To be continued.)

DRAMATIC ANECDOTES.

MADEMOISELLE CLAIRON gives the following account in her memoirs. "In the whole history of the [French] stage, "no more than three actors that may be called truly grand "can be named, *Baron, Dufrêne*, and *Le Kain*.

"*Baron* had the advantage of being taught by Molière: his "understanding was good, his figure fine, and his life was pass- "ed in the company of men who at that time rendered France "illustrious. Like other actors, when he was young, he de- "claimed in a tone of recitative; but by degrees he raised him- "self to the level of the first persons in the kingdom, who "admitted him of their society, and thus became familiar with "simple and true grandeur. This he imparted to every part "he played, and the stage received from him the first lessons "in that truth of coloring which is at all times so difficult to "attain.

"*Dufrêne*, rather specious than profound, noble but never "terrible, enthusiastic but disorderly, without those principles "and fine traits which characterize genius, owed all his suc- "cess to the uncommon beauties of his voice and person. It "must indeed be allowed that the public of his time did not "require so much as they do at present.

"*Le Kain*, a simple student of his art, possessed of an infe- "rior and unpleasant figure, a bad stature and voice, and a "feeble constitution, makes but one bound from his study to "the stage, and genius his only guide: aided only by his know- "ledge of the art, he there exhibits himself the most power- "ful, captivating, and interesting of men. I do not speak of "his first, nor of his last efforts. In the one he doubted, felt "his way, and was often deceived, which was natural: in the "other his powers failed, he often became a slow and mono- "tonous declaimer; but in his prime of life he was un- "equalled.

"I must however confess, that he was not equally great in "the works of all authors. He could not properly render "*Corneille*, and for him *Racine* was too simple; it was only in

" some scenes of these poets in which his soul was thoroughly " roused.

" In the tragedies of *Voltaire* alone his perfection was asto- " nishing. Like the author, in these he was alternately noble, " true, feeling, profound, terrible, or sublime. The talents " of *Le Kain* were then so great, that his physical defects " were no longer perceptible. His education had been excel- " lent: he understood several languages, read much, and " judged soundly; but had he not assiduously studied the " dramatic art, he would never have obtained fame as an " actor——"

Among her several reflections, the same lady makes the following:

" I have heard it said, that the money received at the play- " house door dishonors the mercenary actor. '*This is a fellow* " *that I pay*; these people receive my money, and I expect " them to give me pleasure;' are phrases which do but excite " my pity, for the fools that utter them. What office on " earth is performed without being paid for, either in one " way or another? The lord of the bedchamber, the general, " the bishop, the prime minister, are paid. I can neither " enjoy food, clothes, nor lodging, without giving money for " such enjoyments. If I make my will, I must pay: if I con- " sult an attorney, or send to a physician, I must pay: if I " christen my child, bury my servant, or ask for a seat in the " church, I must pay. Are not these respectable authorities? " How can I pay others, if I am not paid myself?"

When Garrick and Barry became declared rivals, Romeo and Juliet was performed, at both houses, till the town was thoroughly tired; and loud complaints were made that no theatrical entertainment could be procured, except Romeo and Juliet. Garrick, wishing himself to put an end to a contest which was become absurd, wrote the following Epigram:

" Well, what's to-night?" says angry Ned,
As up from bed he rouses:
" Romeo again!" and shakes his head;
" A plague o' both your houses!"

On the rival Lears of the same performers, the two following were written:

The town has found out different ways,
To praise the different Lears;
To Barry they give loud huzzas,
To Garrick—only tears.

ANOTHER.

A king! Ay, ev'ry inch a king!
Such Barry doth appear:
But Garrick's quite a different thing—
He's ev'ry inch King Lear.

MISCELLANIES.

THE stings of a wicked conscience may furnish the tragic poet with inexhaustible resources. Henry Stephens, the famous printer, who translated Anacreon, and who gave the world so many proofs of learning and genius, has left us the following account*:

"Most people have known, or seen, or at least heard speak of, a magistrate, who has been honored by one of our French poets with the title of Rhadamanthus, and who doubly deserved to be called a *Lieutenant criminel* [of Police].

"Being taken dangerously ill, and after a fearful examination of his conscience, he was suddenly seized with a dread that he was to be put to death. 'Alas,' he cried, 'I know too well how much I have deserved my fate! I have been guilty of such and such an extortion, and partaken in such and such an act of pillage. In every manner and degree my conscience has been sold.'

"Not satisfied with speaking thus in general terms, he named the individuals of whose death he knew himself to be the cause, and entreated them to forgive him.

"At length it entered his imagination that the king had sometimes pardoned criminals who merited death, and then could

* *Traité prep. a l'ap. pour Herodote*, 1566, p. 411.

speak on no other subject. The hope of pardon was encouraged by his physicians, to quiet his mind, but in vain; the enormity of his crimes, he said, could not be forgotten, and it was impossible that they could be forgiven.

"These torments of conscience so far endangered his life, that one of his physicians, at length, caused a pretended messenger to arrive, booted and spurred, furnished with large letters, who knocked violently at the door, and entering exclaimed, aloud, Pardon! Pardon!

"This expedient, however, had nearly proved fatal; for, from the rude knocking, the wretch could scarcely be persuaded that it was not the public executioner. By degrees he was calmed; but he lived only a little while afterward, when he exchanged a miserable life for a death still more miserable."

The lieutenant of police, at Paris, has ever been one of the most arbitrary officers of an arbitrary government. The nature of this office, joined to the above sketch, might furnish a fine subject for the drama.

HAYMARKET THEATRE.

A riot that threatened serious consequences happened at this place on the evening of August 15, but which was happily quelled.

Among the pieces advertised by Mr. Dowton, for his benefit, was THE TAILORS; or, A Tragedy for Warm Weather: a piece written as some say by Foote, others say not, and at which the body of men, who suppose themselves ridiculed in it, have continually taken offence, and been repeatedly riotous.

Previous to opening the doors, they assembled to the number of seven hundred, as it is said, and dispersed themselves chiefly in the gallery, or the pit; the journeymen above, and the masters below. Such was the noise they made, that, not a syllable could be heard till nine o'clock, Messrs. Palmer and Elliston, who appeared to ask what was their pleasure, were hissed off. Mr. Dowton then came and assured the audience the Tailors should be withdrawn, and the Village Lawyer performed in its stead, while written bills were distributed in

every part of the house to the same purport, so that this information was given both within doors and without. All was in vain.

Mr. Dowton appeared once more, and a penknife was thrown at him, from the galleries: it is to be hoped it was not open, for such an act would be too atrocious! it exceeds belief! He offered however a reward of twenty pounds, to those who should apprehend the offender. Constables were called in, and, under the authority of Mr. Graham, magistrate and manager of the Theatre Royal, Drury-lane, several of the rioters were secured. Their spirits were daunted by the arrival of a detachment of the horse-guards, and it is said fifty of them were conveyed away in coaches. The passages to the theatre were impeded, till the constables and guards received their orders.

During the performance of Katherine and Petruchio, the audience frequently called for The Tailors, and were assured that it should be given, provided the scene between the Tailor and Petruchio did not create fresh disturbance. At length the piece in contention was attempted, but when the curtain drew up the confusion again became extreme: loud vociferations, whistles, and yells, were heard, and the strongest opposition became manifest. The constables were however so judiciously stationed, that about twenty other persons were taken into custody, and peace in a measure was restored. Happily there were no accidents.

Without in the least examining the question, whether it be liberal or allowable to ridicule a body of men, it is obvious that by applying the ridicule to themselves they give it tenfold force. Beside, supposing it all to be wrong, one wrong action will not justify another: much less could a wrong of a trifling, and even of a laughable nature, afford the least excuse for mischief, so serious as that which is likely to result, where not only the civil force but the military are obliged to be called in, for public safety. These men were surely not aware of the dreadful evils which they provoked.

The particulars of the above account were extracted from the Morning Chronicle, the editor not having been himself at

the theatre. Further information was contained in the same paper the next day: it was not a penknife, but a pair of scissars and a thimble, that were thrown at Mr. Dowton. A tailor throwing his thimble to revenge himself is highly ludicrous.

The exertions of Mr. Graham do him great honor: his conduct appears to have been precisely that which was calculated to prevent mischief, that might have been we know not, alas, how serious. He created constables for the occasion, and called in the military to act as he should direct. When the magistracy and the military act thus agreeably to the constitution, in cases of sudden emergency, they mutually deserve great, very great praise.

Sixteen of the rioters were admitted to bail, under recognizances of fifty pounds each; and of forty each, for their two sureties. Four were remanded for want of bail, and the rest discharged. Except Richard Phillips, a carver and gilder, the prisoners were all tailors.

Threatening letters had been sent to Mr. Winston, a proprietor of the theatre, asserting that 17,000 tailors would assemble, and ten thousand more be held in readiness. One of these letters was signed *Death*. Several others also were sent to Mr. Dowton; some of them anonymous, and some with signatures. A man, named Riley, brought his letter himself, and uttered many threats, with insolent language.

These men had even the rashness to write from one of their houses of call, and caused their letter to be formally signed by the clerk, as an act of the society. They were little aware that by this act, having afterward bred a riot, had serious mischief happened, the whole society lay at the mercy of the law, and were subjected to no less than the penalties of death. Happily, our magistracy are too humane and too well informed to inflict such extreme and sanguinary punishments.

The following intelligence was received last month, but not soon enough for publication, as noticed in the answer to Correspondents. I have curtailed it in part, because my Correspondent honorably informs me, the intelligence so curtailed was received

by him from a source which I consider as doubtful, since it is contradictory to other current reports. If I knew the exact truth concerning the success of Master Betty, during his summer excursion, it should be here stated; but as some assert it has been exceedingly great, and others almost the reverse, I can but repeat these different assertions.

There are two parties on this subject, both in town and country, who may in time perhaps become as violent and as ridiculous as the partisans of Piccini and Gluck *, about twenty years ago, were at Paris. We learn from the authors of the age of Shakspeare, and in part from himself, of the rage which then prevailed for *childish performances*; or, should the phrase displease, for *the performances of children*. This passion seems to have revived in all its ancient force. There appears to be danger lest men should employ themselves so diligently, to distinguish between the rival talents of puerility, that they will no longer be able to appreciate those that are become mature. They can be satisfied with nothing less than miracles.

'TO THE EDITOR OF THE THEATRICAL RECORDER.

'THEATRE, BIRMINGHAM. The young Roscius closed his engagements at this theatre with *Gustavus Vasa*. The stationary performers here, with a few exceptions, are below criticism, and the merits of those who may be excepted bear the "death-stamp" of mediocrity. Were it not for the novel scintillations of a few wandering STARS, as they are theatrically called, woe to this "theatric hemisphere," to use the language of the figurative Mr. Bisset. Considering the populousness of this town and neighbourhood, theatrical business is very ill supported here. Mr. Cooke and Mr. Munden succeed the young Roscius; the former for five nights, and the latter for ten.

'THEATRE, WOLVERHAMPTON. Mr. Incledon, alias the *Wandering Melodist*, gave us his evening's *sing-song* as he passed through this town. The recitation and anecdote which are introductory to the songs are the inflated attempts of some no-

*Two famous and excellent musical composers. Piccini was an Italian, Gluck a German. They have both left works that honor their memory.

vice, whose wit cannot see its way through his words; a weak and imbecile effort at fine and flowery writing, neither embellished by fancy, nor enlivened by humor. A very crowded and fashionable audience received the *vocal* part of the entertainment with the applause to which it is entitled; it served as a lump of sugar to a dose of physic. The young Roscius played here five nights to very fashionable houses—"without o'erflowing full." The boxes were raised to the enormous price of eight shillings, and the pit and gallery in proportion.—After the second night, the prices were reduced to six, four, and two. I understand that his engagement at Covent-garden *is not cancelled*, as several papers have asserted; and that the interview between Mr. Betty and Mr. Harris, mentioned in several morning papers, *never took place!* Mr. Betty has been severely censured for refusing to let his son play for the theatrical fund; in answer to which he shows his engagement with Mr. Harris, closing on the 23d of May; and his engagement at Liverpool, made in 1804, commencing on May the 27th, 1805, under a forfeiture of *one thousand guineas*, which precluded the possibility of his compliance.

'THEATRE, WORCESTER. This theatre opened on the 22d ult. with the young Roscius, who is engaged for seven nights. Mr. Archer has been much condemned for refusing to play with Master Betty. Mr. Archer, in this case, neither studies his interest nor his fame, since the characters he refuses are the only ones he can play with any credit to himself. Mr. Spragg is, by this contemptible pride, thrown into situations, at a few days notice, for which no study could fit him; whereby he is exposed to ridicule, to which, either as a man or an actor, he is not entitled.

'Miss Fisher, the celebrated *Roscia*, is performing at Gloucester, who, if we may believe the Gloucester *Herald*, as much exceeds Master Betty as Master Betty does Garrick—*Probably so.*'

The following appeared in the Chester Chronicle of Aug. 2, and was transmitted by the same correspondent, to whom the Editor is proud to acknowledge his obligations:

'On Wednesday, the 17th ult. Miss Fisher, the *Young Roscia*, appeared at Gloucester, in the character of Richard III. where her performance, it is said, "drew down the most unbounded plaudits from a very crowded audience." The versatility of this young female's talents is represented to be such as to *surpass* the bounds of probability, and to approach *very near the verge of impossibility!!* The part of Cowslip, which she sustained in the farce on the above evening, with the greatest *eclat*, she is stated "never to have seen till three o'clock that afternoon, and the public MAY rely on the fact, that it was learned, without assistance, during her ride from Cheltenham to Gloucester." We offer no remarks on this assertion; it certainly appears rather marvellous; yet, *perhaps, it may not be impossible!* But, whatever may be the talents of herself, and her *contemporary rival!* we are inclined to think the *versatility* of John Bull's disposition surpasses them, nor can we account for it on any other principle than a most inordinate thirst after novelty and *children's play!*'

COSTUME.

The last number contained a *Kherch-burdar*, or house purveyor, as he is coming from market; and, such is Eastern indolence, he must have an attendant to carry what he has purchased.

A *B'heesty*, or water-carrier, with his *musuck*, or leathern water bag. He supplies the house, and waters the *tattees*, that are placed to cool the wind in the hot season.

A *Hooka-burdar*, carrying the *hooka*.

Signora Grassini, in a Roman Costume. Nothing can exceed the majesty and simple dignity of this most excellent actress, especially in the scene with the brother, as seen in the attitude in which she is here sketched.

The present Number contains her counterpart, Mr. Braham, in the same opera.

A *Chowry-burdar*; or, an attendant to drive away insects; employed by the English, at their meals; and formerly by both English and Natives, on all occasions of state.

A *Hajaum*; or, barber.

A *Hircarrah*; or, messenger, and runner in processions; under the *Jummadar*.

MONTHLY LIST, FOR JULY AND AUGUST, 1805.

HAYMARKET.

JULY

29. The Spanish Barber - - - - - - The Jew and the Doctor, and Tom Thumb.
30. Speed the Plough - - - - - - - The Village Lawyer.
31. The Chapter of Accidents - - - A Tale of Mystery.

AUGUST

1. The Birth Day - - - - - - - - - The Lying Valet, and Tom Thumb.
2. The Iron Chest - - - - - - - - - The Hunter of the Alps.
3. The Children in the Wood - - - Love Laughs at Locksmiths, and Tom Thumb.
5. The Mountaineers - - - - - - - Tom Thumb.
6. The Road to Ruin - - - - - - - Peeping Tom.
7. A Tale of Mystery - - - - - - - The Follies of a Day, and Tom Thumb.
8. The Castle Spectre - - - - - - - Blue Devils, and The Dead Alive.
9. The Mountaineers - - - - - - - Tom Thumb.
10. The Liar - - - - - - - - - - - Honest Thieves, and Ditto.
12. The Children in the Wood - - - Love Laughs at Locksmiths.
13. Wild Oats (Benefit. Mr. and Mrs. Taylor) - - - - - - - - - - - The Recruiting Serjeant, and The Devil to Pay.
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15. The Birth Day (Benefit. Mr. Dowton) - - - - - - - - - - - Katherine and Petruchio, and The Tailors.
16. Ways and Means - - - - - - - - The Hunter of the Alps, and Tom Thumb.
17. The Honey Moon (Benefit. Mr. Decamp) - - - - - - - - - - - Sylvester Daggerwood, and The Son in Law.
19. The Good-natured Man (Benefit. Mr. Mathews) - - - - - - - - The Three and the Deuce, and The Honest Yorkshireman.
20. Wild Oats - - - - - - - - - - - Tom Thumb.
21. Speed the Plough - - - - - - - Love Laughs at Locksmiths.
22. Sylvester Daggerwood - - - - - The Three and the Deuce, and Tom Thumb.
23. The Iron Chest - - - - - - - - - The Son in Law.
24. The Soldier's Daughter (Benefit. Mrs. Harlow) - - - - - - - - Lovers' Quarrels, and The Farmer.

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